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LETTERS

ON THE

Engliſh and French Nations;

CONTAINING

Curious and uſeful Obſervations on their Conſtitutions natural and political;

Nervous and humorous Deſcriptions of the Virtues, Vices, Ridicules and Foibles of the Inhabitants:

Critical Remarks on their Writers;

Together with Moral Reflections interſperſed throughout the Work.

In Two Volumes.

By Monſ. L'Abbé le Blanc.

Quid verum atque decens, curo & rogo, & omnis in hoc ſum.
Horat. l. i. ep. 1.

VOL. I.

Tranſlated from the Original French.

LONDON:

Printed for J. Brindley in *New-Bondſtreet*; R. Francklin in *Ruſſel-ſtreet, Covent-Garden*; C. Davis in *Holbourn*; and J. Hodges, *London-Bridge*. MDCCXLVII.

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Concerning this

TRANSLATION.

THE title of the original French is extremely ſimple and modeſt, being only *Lettres d'un Francois*, or *Letters of a Frenchman*, without the leaſt mention of the author's name, or any other intimation of the ſubject, than what is comprehended in the motto. The firſt of theſe deficiencies we have ſupplied by undoubted authority, and the ſecond upon a ſtrong preſumption of affording ſatisfaction to the Engliſh reader.

THE author, Monſieur L'ABBE' LE BLANC, is a gentleman equally re-

commendable for learning, wiſdom and probity, who, by invitation of a Britiſh nobleman of the firſt order, accompanied him into England in the year 1737, and remained full ſeven years among us. By this happy introduction he daily had the moſt favourable opportunities of converſing with perſons in high life here; and his ſtrong deſire of knowing mankind led him to learn our language, and frequently to deſcend to the lower rank of people: and thus he ſeems every way qualified to be an obſervant ſpectator of our manners, cuſtoms, virtues and vices, from the peer to the peaſant. How he has acquitted himſelf of his *ſpectatorial* taſk, is entirely ſubmitted to the judgment of the public: all that we ſhall preſume on this head is to wiſh, that whatever he ſays to the diſadvantage of our country may prove to be the fruits of miſinformation or prejudice. But what nation,

and

and more eſpecially what opulent nation is perfectly wiſe and virtuous, without any mixture of vices and follies?

That M. le Blanc is intimately acquainted with the moſt famous perſons in France for philoſophy and polite literature, the liſt of his correſpondents is a convincing proof: and as a ſpecimen of the advantageous opinion, which they entertain of him, we cannot reſiſt the temptation of publiſhing the following letter, wrote to him in Engliſh by the celebrated M. de Voltaire, upon his peruſal of theſe letters.

To M. LE BLANC.

" Dear Sir,

" I was at Verſailles, when you " did me the favour to ſend " me your book. I received it at " my return to Paris; and I ſhould " have come to your houſe, in order

" preſent you with my moſt hearty
" thanks, were I not debarr'd from
" this pleaſure, and from all the du-
" ties of life, by the deplorable ſtate
" of my crazy conſtitution.

" THE reading of your LETTERS
" has aſſwaged for ſome time the
" continual tortures nature has doom-
" ed me to. Had I often ſuch cor-
" dials, I would not complain any
" more of my ills. I ſupport life
" when I ſuffer, I enjoy it when I
" read you. I wiſh you had tra-
" vell'd through all the world, and
" wrote on all nations. It becomes
" only a wiſe man to travel and to
" write: but our travellers, our wri-
" ters, and our readers are for the
" moſt part very far from being wiſe.
" I thank you again, and ſhall read
" you again.

" *Your moſt humble Servant,*

Paris, Jan. 17, 1746.

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LETTERS

ON THE

Engliſh and French Nations.

LETTER I.

To the Marquis DE G***;

Containing ſome general obſervations on the natural and political conſtitution of England, and the temper and inclinations of the inhabitants.

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD,

THE ſtudy beſt becoming man is that of man himſelf, and ought to be the principal object of every ſenſible traveller. The manners and government of a foreign nation put us on our guard againſt our prejudices, and are the ſureſt way to rectify our ideas and improve our knowledge. Such was the practice of the

ancient philoſophers. The Greeks travelled into Egypt in ſearch of wiſdom's treaſures; and there learnt new ſciences, and brought new arts back with them. The Romans went to Greece to ſtudy policy requiſite for government, and philoſophy which makes men ſenſible of the connexion between virtue and happineſs.

PARIS poſſeſſes in ſome reſpects the glory, which Athens and Rome have ſucceſſively enjoyed: ſtrangers flock thither from all parts; and how much it were to be wiſhed for them and us, that the wiſdom of our morals attracted them as much as the politeneſs of our behaviour! The metropolis of France ſees in London a worthy and jealous rival, making continual efforts to diſpute precedence. The Engliſh paſs for the moſt rational nation in Europe. All that I have read, and all that you have ſaid to me concerning England, excited my curioſity: I have followed your advice, and reſolved to be perſonally acquainted with this people, which are in ſuch high repute for wiſdom, and think themſelves ſuperior to all others.

And indeed, how can one avoid forming the moſt advantageous notions of a nation, which appears to be at the ſame time warlike, trading and philoſophical! 'Tis Rome, 'tis Carthage, 'tis Athens itſelf. If you credit the Engliſh, both the empire of the ſeas, and the right of holding the ballance of Europe equally belong to them; and in their pretenſions

ſions at leaſt you find a proof of their power. Queen Elizabeth laid the foundations of their greatneſs: Cromwell finiſhed the building; and it was by diminiſhing the liberty of the ſubject that he found means to render his nation ſo powerful. The Engliſh have been at different times the terror of their neighbours; and at preſent they are their maſters in the branches of knowledge the moſt uſeful to ſociety. Among this induſtrious people learning flouriſhes, arts are cultivated, and commerce entertains plenty in the different ranks and conditions of men.

What can procure theſe advantages to a country, which without being more fertile than thoſe around it, is inhabited by richer men; a country which is in want of wood, and yet covers the ſeas with its ſhips; which produces few things abſolutely neceſſary for its neighbours, and yet has ſuch a flouriſhing trade with all the world!

Whatever the Engliſh may ſay, it is certain, that the ſituation of their iſland has as great a ſhare therein as the nature of their government. The ſea which ſurrounds them, by preſcribing bounds to their conqueſts, compels them to take to commerce; which is the ſource of their power, as well as that of their liberty.

However let us not be impoſed on by the panegyrics they make on their laws and policy; let us judge of them by the influence they have on their morals; and let us exa-

mine whether this people are really happier than their neighbours. This is the only way to know if they are more truly rational. Their form of government ſeems dictated by wiſdom itſelf: but perhaps one needs no more than to read their hiſtory, or dwell among them, to be convinced that this government ſo boaſted of, like PLATO's republic, is but an ideal project not reducible to practice. Let us ſuppoſe England to be in the ſame caſe with China, of which it is ſaid, that there would not be a better governed country in the univerſe, if the integrity of the officers was anſwerable to the wiſdom of the laws: let us allow the Engliſh, that the plan of their political conſtitution is, of all others known, the wiſeſt in appearance; can they pretend that it is really ſo, if impoſſible to be put in execution? It has perhaps the greateſt of all defects, that is, to ſuppoſe a degree of perfection in man, which human nature is not capable of.

What is properly ſtiled the People, is what moſt diſtinguiſhes the Engliſh from their neighbours; the ſhare they have in the government by their right to chooſe their repreſentatives, inſpires them with a certain courage, which is not to be found in other countries in thoſe of the ſame rank: but that which in a higher degree of life gives noble and elevated ſentiments, among the lower people produces but haughtineſs and inſolence. The courage of thoſe of this claſs

contributes

contributes more towards disturbing the good order of society, than shewing their love for the laws, to which they owe their privileges.

'Tis not in the government alone, but likewise in the nature of the country inhabited by the English, that we are to seek the reasons of the every-way remarkable differences between them and their neighbours: the same cause which changes the taste of fruits according to the soil they grow in, produces this variety of humours and inclinations in men according to the quality of the air they breath. Even as vegetables, so do we partake of the nature of the climate we live in. Let us take an example from among ourselves, and observe the effects of the sun on our different provinces. The inhabitants of those where orange-trees thrive, and those of that rich country abounding with apple-trees, have a great affinity of characters with their neighbours: in the Normans you find the good sense of the English; and the genius of a Provencal is pretty nearly of the same stamp with that of the Italians.

'Tis to the fogs, with which their island is generally overspread, that the English are indebted for the richness of their soil, and the melancholic disposition of their constitutions. This sad disposition of their minds is perhaps the cause, which makes them so violent in their passions: they eagerly pursue the object which diverts them from it: and thus they exhaust themselves, and not only become

early inſenſible to the pleaſures of life, but unable to bear misfortunes of ever ſo ſhort duration. Their dejected ſouls have not fortitude enough to ſuffer. If ſome courage is requiſite for Suicide, more ſtill is neceſſary for ſupporting grief. This ſame tendency to melancholy prevents their ever being content with their fate, and equally renders them enemies to tranquillity and friends to liberty. Thus in the very nature of the air they breath, we find the primary ſource of their inconſtancy, and conſequently the moſt powerful obſtacle to the perfect eſtabliſhment of their government; the harmony of which will always be diſturbed by their reſtleſs temper.

Theſe, my lord, are the different ſubjects, on which I will ſometimes entertain thoſe, who have ſufficient confidence in me, to believe me capable of giving them an account of what paſſes under my eye. Reading, events, literature, manners, every thing in a word will afford matter for my obſervations. Whenever I happen to be miſtaken, who can rectify my notions better than your lordſhip? You have happily improved nature's moſt valuable gift, I mean that philoſophical turn of mind, which ſets a true value on all things. You know mankind in general, and the Engliſh in particular, the different politics of governments, and the phyſical and moral cauſes thereof. If I have not all theſe advantages, I dare aſſure you at leaſt, that nothing

thing ſhall make me deviate from truth, but the misfortune of not well diſcerning it.

I have the honour to be,

My lord,

Your lordſhip's moſt humble, &c.

LETTER II.

To the Marquis DE G***;

On the prejudices of mankind in favour of their native country, and the exceſs of them in the Engliſh; with ſome cenſures on the French.

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD,

THE love of our country, which nature has ingrafted on every heart, is one of the moſt uſeful virtues to the ſupport of the community: but it is with this as with many others; our vanity may blend ſome vicious tincture with it, that may alter its purity. Nothing is proof againſt the taint of ſelf-love. Prejudices ſometimes render this attachment to one's native ſoil ridiculous in particular inſtances, which is ſo commendable in general.

It is more difficult than is imagined to get rid of thoſe national prejudices, which injure our reaſon, and hinder us from putting ourſelves in a true point of light to form a right judgment of objects not familiar to us: whatever other precautions are taken, they are ſeen only through a glaſs, that either magnifies or diminiſhes them, and frequently gives them wrong colours. The power of habit hurries us away, and makes us condemn manners which have no other defect but that of not being our's. Accuſtom'd to the hat, the turban ſhocks us: ſimplicity paſſes for rudeneſs with thoſe who do not reflect, how much of the arbitrary enters into what is called politeneſs; we laugh at that of the Chineſe, without conſidering that they have the ſame right to laugh at our's. And indeed, when a perſon loves his country, and, what is ſtill more ridiculous, ſometimes without loving it, he is unjuſt with regard to others. Whatever reproaches we may poſſibly deſerve in this reſpect, you know we have one obligation to the Engliſh, that is, for not having left us in poſſeſſion of the ridiculouſneſs of being the moſt prevented in favour of our nation. Few men are truly philoſophers, that is, reaſonable: few men have like you that ſound underſtanding, which corrects the errors of education, ſuffers itſelf not to be impoſed on by the authority of the multitude; and knows on all occaſions to diſcern where virtue ends and vice begins.

However

However good opinion one entertains of the Engliſh, he is ſtill ſurprized at the exceſs of their prejudices: far from confining them to things which are peculiar to them, they extend them without bounds: they would be thought to excell all mankind in all things. In vain have their moſt celebrated writers piqued themſelves of impartiality: the greateſt part have had the ſame thoughts of their country with the common people, who are not acquainted with any other. According to them, the fineſt countries of Aſia are neglected by nature in compariſon of their own. True it is, that their iſland is pleaſant and fertile; they procure by their induſtry ſuch things as the ſoil denies them; which does them more honour, than if they were the productions of their climate: and nothing could be juſtly ſaid againſt them, were it not for the exorbitant encomiums they beſtow on it upon all occaſions. Mr. PRIOR has found means to make Solomon ſing the praiſes of England. The only difference between the language of their authors and that of the common people, is, that the former are more modeſt in their expreſſions: in certain reſpects they do not deſpiſe us as much as the generality of the nation; but yet they plainly intimate that there is a vaſt diſtance between them and us. To take their words, all the efforts of the wit of man cannot imagine a wiſer form of government than theirs; the Engliſh are the moſt induſtrious, brave and virtuous

virtuous people of the whole earth; and the only one that has placed the treaſure of liberty above the reach of deſtiny, both for the honour of human nature in general, and for their own in particular. Why is it not true that this encomium is their due! They equally affect to admire the works of their compatriots, and to deſpiſe the beſt modern productions of authors of other nations. TASSO is not to be compared with MILTON, CORNEILLE with SHAKESPEARE, nor LEIBNITZ or DES CARTES with the great NEWTON.

It muſt be allowed, that the zeal of this nation for liberty ought to make it reſpected by all thoſe, who have the leaſt notion of the dignity of our nature; that its love of ſciences ought to command the eſteem of thoſe, who are in a capacity of diſtinguiſhing the merit they ſuppoſe, and the utility that reſults from them: the Engliſh are humane, brave, dexterous, laborious, &c. Their great fault lies in believing that they alone poſſeſs theſe virtues: with all thoſe peculiar to them, ſome few others would effectually make them, what they think they are, the principal people of the earth. We muſt grant to their glory, that an Engliſhman generally ſpeaks no leſs modeſtly of himſelf than advantageouſly of his country. I am ſorry the ſame thing cannot well be ſaid of us. A Frenchman ſeems to eſteem his nation only with reſpect to himſelf: an Engliſhman appears not to ſet any

value

value on himſelf, but with reſpect to his nation: which gives an air of vanity to the one, and to the other an air of greatneſs.

I have the honour to be,

My lord,

Your lordſhip's moſt humble, &c.

LETTER III.

To Monſieur DE BUFFONS,

Superintendant of the king's botanic garden, and member of the Royal Academy of ſciences at Paris:

On the ſame prejudices, and the contrary folly of the French in affecting to mimick foreign manners and cuſtoms, in contempt of their own.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

THoſe who have no other knowledge of the Engliſh but from the portraits they themſelves make of their manners and character, cannot poſſibly form very exact notions of them. On the contrary, we have more authors than one, on whom a perſon may rely for what concerns us, and who cenſure our defects and ridicules as ſeverely as ſtrangers who are the moſt offended at them. ADDISON has followed the cuſtom of painters, by flattering

tering his nation in the portraits he has drawn of them. LA BRUYERE, if I am not miſtaken, is more faithful in his characters: he has painted our nation juſt as it is. Several of our writers have imitated his ſincerity. In general a confeſſion of the defects, with which our neighbours reproach us, coſts us very little: yet let us draw no conſequence from thence in our favour; I am much afraid that this is only the effect of our prejudices. Perhaps it is barely for want of duly weighing them, that we ſo eaſily confeſs them: and how many are there, of which we are ridiculous enough to boaſt!

In France we think too well and too ill of the Engliſh: they are neither ſuch as they repreſent themſelves, nor as we ſuppoſe them: they are men like others, who have reaſon, but do not always follow its dictates. In their outward appearance they have ſomewhat rough, which prejudiced people take for ferocity: but if the envelop that covers their virtues is vicious, it does not change their nature. Notwithſtanding this apparent roughneſs, no people have more humanity; of which they give proofs to their very enemies. Nothing ſo eaſy as to gain their good graces: every Engliſhman is his friend, who acknowledges the ſuperiority of the nation. If they were ſatisfied with ſounding its praiſes in their writings, they would do no more than is done every where elſe. Our people of Lower Britany believe that their language derives its origin

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gin from the tower of Babel. A certain Swediſh author pretends, that 'tis to Sweden, not to Egypt, that we owe the firſt diſcoveries in ſciences, and inventions in arts. Every man extolls his country; and the love of our country is the effect of ſelf-love. It is ourſelves that we extoll, though we may not be ſenſible of it.

The Engliſh, not content with the preference they give themſelves over their neighbours, do not even take the pains to diſguiſe their contempt for ſome of them, and their hatred of others. They do not ſpare their friends the Dutch more than the French, whom they eſteem their enemies. Their works of all kinds equally declare the little regard they have for other nations, and the good opinion they have of their own. Thoſe of them, who have lived longeſt among us, and who are beſt acquainted with our authors, are frequently the very perſons who render us the leaſt juſtice.

Among us, where examples are to be found of all ſorts of ridicule, this exceſs and its oppoſite are equally run into. Several of us, Frenchmen at London, Engliſhmen at Paris, foreigners every-where, after having ſcandalized our neighbours by the extravagant airs of our Petits-maitres, ſoon make their countrymen laugh by the affectation of whatever foreign behaviour has the moſt contrary to ours. How many are there, who ſeem to have reaped no other fruit from their travels, but the

contempt

contempt of their native country? In their opinion there are no reaſonable men, no wiſe laws, no encouragement for arts, but in the countries whence they are return'd: they are not ſatisfied with beſtowing on foreigners ſuch qualities as they have not; they even refuſe their countrymen thoſe, which ſtrangers allow them. To hear them ſpeak, it ſhould ſeem as if juſtice and humanity were virtues abſolutely unknown in France.

This exceſs is ſtill more to be condemned than that of the Engliſh: if there is a meanneſs of ſoul in deriving vanity from being of this or that nation, or bluſhing for being born in England or France, Italy or Spain; it muſt proceed from ſome vice lurking in the heart. The love of our country ſhould not hinder us from owning its defects: but ſtill we are leſs blameable for over-eſteeming our country, than for over-deſpiſing it. It is with the love of one's country as with paternal love. The blind tenderneſs of a father for his children may render him ridiculous: his ſeverity towards them infallibly excites our indignation. Contempt for one's country ſhews more vanity than reaſon, and proceeds more from a peeviſh humour than a philoſophic mind. Virtue forms the citizen of the world, but 'tis vice alone that can make a man appear a ſtranger in his native country.

In regard to the Engliſh, on whom I intend often to entertain you, ſeveral of us praiſe them without loving them, and the greateſt

greateſt part love or hate them without knowing them; ſome in order to follow the faſhion, others by giving ear to nothing but their prejudices. It is true, that ſince it is faſhionable at preſent to take them for our models, it were to be wiſhed that their merits and demerits were expoſed to us with leſs partiality. For what nation is there, wherein there are not things commendable and blameable to be found? By this means their example would be of greater ſervice to us. Happy, if we ſhewed as much ardour to imitate their peculiar virtues, as inclination to adopt their particular vices. For my part, I do not pretend to paſs judgment on them, but barely repreſent them ſuch as they appear to me. Thoſe judgments that are pronounced on a whole nation, are ſeldom juſt, and generally raſh. Moreover there is not perhaps a people in Europe, of whom it is more difficult to give a general idea, than of thoſe among whom I live at this day. The Engliſh are as different from one another, as their nation is from other nations.

You will doubtleſs find me in contradiction with myſelf, by having already made uſe of this general way of characteriſtics which I condemn; and 'tis probable that I ſhall employ it on every occaſion more than I would chooſe: but I beſeech you not to take it in a literal ſenſe. The reaſon that I indulge myſelf in it, is that whatever care we take to avoid this manner of expreſſion; as it is

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the eaſieſt, we always relapſe into it. A repetition of the ſame circumlocutions proves at length diſagreeable. We endeavour to be conciſe, and it frequently happens without deſign, that we ſay more than we intend; and give a deciſive air to what is but the expoſition of our opinion. Thus, ſir, however deciſive the terms I uſe may appear, be ſure conſtantly to remember that I never intend to decide. And indeed what ſingle man can dare to ſummon a whole nation to his own tribunal?

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER IV.

To the Chevalier DE B**;

On the ridiculous cuſtom of the Engliſh in dreſſing like their ſervants and other inferiors; with a deſcription of the French Petit-maitre and Engliſh Coxcomb.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

IT is a happineſs, when a perſon lives in the world as you do, and where you cannot avoid pleaſing, to carry that ſort of mind into it, which adopts nothing but by choice, which

which contracts a habit of the politeneſs without taking up the ridicules thereof, and which the contagion of the moſt reputable examples cannot corrupt. 'Tis commonly for want of other talents to make them be taken notice of, that the greateſt part of mankind aſſume thoſe airs and affectations, which you condemn, and which are ſo ſhocking to good ſenſe. However do not think the Engliſh wiſer than us: their ridicules are different, but men are every where the ſame.

You know the near relation of little things to great. He who would know a nation, ought to obſerve every thing: the manner of dreſs of different people depends, more perhaps than one may imagine, on their way of thinking. The Eaſtern people, who have for ſo long a time preſerved the ſame manners, have likewiſe for ſeveral ages worn pretty much the ſame turban. And does it not appear almoſt to a demonſtration, that we Frenchmen, who change our faſhions ſo frequently, are the people of the greateſt levity and inconſtancy in Europe?

After this declaration, you will not ſuſpect me of partiality for my country: but at the ſame time I will venture to tell you, that, with regard to the inconſtancy of faſhions, thoſe neighbours of ours, among whom I live at preſent, might well deſerve ſome cenſure: and if they have eſcaped it hitherto, 'tis purely perhaps becauſe they are not ſufficiently known. For ſeveral centuries paſt ſtrangers

have frequented Paris, in order to ſtudy our manners: but 'tis not long ſince their curioſity called them to London; and beſides, what do they come hither to ſee? The town, not the inhabitants: they arrive without knowing the language, and their ſtay is too ſhort to learn it. Thus tho' they have acquired a competent knowledge of the capital city of England, yet they remain extremely ignorant of the manners of the people.

For example, is it not aſtoniſhing, that in a nation which prides itſelf in its good ſenſe, faſhion has been able to introduce ſo unreaſonable a cuſtom, as that which prevails at preſent among perſons of the higheſt rank? At Paris the Valets de Chambre, and Ladies-women are frequently the apes of their maſters and miſtreſſes in dreſs. At London 'tis juſt the reverſe: maſters dreſs like their valets, and dutcheſſes copy after their chamber-maids. That the merchant affects to dreſs like a gentleman of the long robe, and a farmer of the cuſtoms like a courtier, is at Paris but a neceſſary conſequence of the predominant luxury, and of the ſilly vanity ſo natural to all men: but that perſons of diſtinction ſhould take pride in dreſſing like their domeſtics, is a whim that borders upon irrationality. However there is no doubt, but it is from a principle of another ſort of vanity that many of the Engliſh affect to appear ſo modeſt in their dreſs. Is not pride the latent principle of moſt of our actions, and ſometimes even of our humility?

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Some of them indeed conform to this cuſtom, purely in order to appear the more popular: but theſe may be reproach'd at leaſt for not chooſing better means to pleaſe the people. As for the women, 'tis very probable, that that ſome of them indulge this cuſtom from a motive of refinement upon coquettery; and that the ſelf-love of others will not ſuffer them to doubt of their being in danger of loſing aught by their neglect of ornaments.

This affectation of plainneſs in dreſs is ſupported in London by thoſe, who think they have a right to give authority even to indecency. To deſpiſe pomp, and prefer conveniency to ornaments, is to have philoſophy: but not to conform to eſtabliſhed cuſtom, and to affect to make a different appearance from rational people of the ſame rank, is a ſign of wanting it. As to dreſs, is it not ridiculous in a peer of the realm to appear caſt in the ſame mould with a brewer; and does the ſame ſort of apron, which orange-wenches wear in the play-houſes, ſit well on a court-lady? I own that people of good ſenſe profeſſedly deſpiſe thoſe who follow ſo extravagant a cuſtom: and indeed there is great room to fear, that perſons, who deviate ſo far from their own condition, have imbibed the manners of thoſe, whom they make it their glory to reſemble. If this affectation gives no ſuſpicion of their baſeneſs of ſoul, it is generally a proof a little mind.

How whimſical ſo ever this mode may appear to you, it is nevertheleſs regularly obſerved here by a ſort of Petits-maitres very different from thoſe of Paris, but neither leſs remarkable, nor leſs ridiculous. The true Engliſh Petit-maitre is not he who copies after ours, but on the contrary he who makes a ſhew of behaviour diametrically oppoſite to that of the French. Exquiſite cloaths, a ſingular equipage, jewels of all ſorts, perfumes, patches, an affected tone of voice, little wit, much prattle, and a head void of ſenſe; are pretty nearly the neceſſary qualifications of a French Petit-maitre. A ſhort bob wig without powder, a handkerchief round the neck inſtead of of a cravat, a ſailor's waiſtcoat, a ſtrong knotty ſtick, a rough tone and language, an affectation of the airs and an imitation of the manners of the meaneſt populace; theſe are the characteriſtics of the Engliſh Petit-maitre. And even ſuch abuſes partake of the general way of thinking of a nation. In China, where the ſciences are in eſteem, the ſmart young fellows always carry books under their arms, and an inkhorn hung round the neck. In a word, nothing has a nearer reſemblance to our pedants than the Chineſe Petits-maitres. Complaint has been made that the converſation of ours is but a ſtring of pretty trifles; and that, unleſs the diſcourſe runs on modes and ſnuff-boxes, plays and opera's, they have not a word to ſay. That of the Engliſh Petits-maitres is not more extenſive, but it is of a quite different

rent nature. Hunting and other bodily exerciſes, taverns and the moſt exorbitant debauches are the ſubjects of it. A French Petit-maitre is conſtantly employ'd in bawbles: he ridicules every thing that is ſerious, and is extremely ſerious on all mere trifles. He inſiſts on preſiding over faſhions: ſometimes he communicates new ideas to a ribbon-weaver, at other times he adds ſome graces to the facings of a lady's gown: in a word DU CHAPT conſults him, and he is the oracle of all the milliners and toyſhops of the Palais. The taſte of the Engliſh Petit-maitre is very different: he values himſelf more upon his rudeneſs than civility: the public diverſions, that are calculated for the dregs of the people, are the only ones, in which he finds any amuſement: he takes delight in mixing with chairmen, excells in boxing with them; and has the moſt exalted notions of this noble exerciſe.

After having laid before you the ridicules of the one and the other, I aſk you, ſir, whether the powder à la Marechale of the Petits-maitres of Paris is not preferable to the dirty bob-wigs and heads of hair of thoſe of London. A Frenchman, as here deſcribed, in the mouth of an Engliſhman is a MONKEY. Then who can admire, if the creature I have put in contraſt with him, paſſes with us for a BEAR. 'Tis certain at leaſt that human nature is equally degraded in both. What matters it, whether a man reſolves to reſemble

a monkey or a bear? From the moment he bluſhes to be a man, let us not heſitate to diſclaim him in our turn. Whether Engliſhmen or Frenchmen, let us have no indulgence for the vices of our country; and let us not acknowledge for our country-men, or even for men, but thoſe who make uſe of their reaſon.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER V.

To Monſieur DE BUFFONS;

On politeneſs to ſtrangers, and national animoſities: with a recommendation of humanity.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

WE hold politeneſs to ſtrangers to be one of the virtues of our nation; yet 'tis one of thoſe which the Engliſh diſpute the moſt with us: you know it by thoſe with whom you have lived: as much as they extolled the earneſt deſire you ſhewed to make their reſidence at Dijon agreeable to them, and the pleaſures you procured for them at Mont-Bard; ſo much have they complained of the cold reception they met with elſewhere. They have often told you, that a Frenchman is much better received at London, than an Engliſhman

man at Paris : and I believe they told you the truth. But, if I miſtake not, this proceeds leſs from the more or leſs eſtimable qualities of the people of the two nations, than from thoſe of the countries themſelves, which have not the ſame reciprocal allurements for their neighbours. Such as go abroad purely for amuſement, ſeldom come into England. The prejudice runs againſt the climate, and London does not promiſe them pleaſure enough to tempt them. The countries to which travellers ſeldomeſt go, are commonly thoſe where hoſpitality is beſt kept up. Might not this be the reaſon of the great civilities ſhewn to ſtrangers in London ? Few are ſeen there. If they are well-come to us, here they are ſought after ? As it is not ſuppoſed that pleaſure brought them hither, the people make it one, agreeably to deceive their expectations. Their curioſity is regarded as the effect of their eſteem for the nation ; and pains are taken to juſtify it. Many ſtudy to invent ſuch amuſements as may obliterate the memory of thoſe, which the climate refuſes. They know that ſtrangers generally come hither to ſee men, and each particular perſon does his endeavours to give the moſt advantageous notions of the whole body. In France this laudable emulation is not ſo common. If ſome houſes in Paris are open to ſtrangers, how many are there, where their preſence is dreaded ? Our behaviour towards them does not always come up to the fine ſpeeches ſo familiar to us. Few take

the trouble to do them the honours of the nation: each particular perſon is ſatisfied with giving them a good opinion of himſelf; and in this they do not all ſucceed.

However, in regard to the Engliſh, you will eaſily imagine, that the queſtion here regards only that ſelect number of men, who in all nations are made to repreſent them, becauſe they are poſſeſſed of all their virtues without any mixture of their defects: for you are not ignorant, to what degree the common people of London are rough, ill-bred, and eſpecially enemies to the French. The great civilities done by the well-bred people, are perhaps hightened by a deſire to attone for the inſults the populace are always ready to offer us, and which our very dreſs will ſometimes occaſion. The common people of Paris, without ſuppoſing them more civil, are of a milder temper at leaſt: nay the very reproaches that are thrown on them, beſpeak the goodneſs of the character peculiar to them.

Moreover, here as every where elſe, ſome of the vulgar are to be found in every rank and condition of life. * What diſtinguiſhes men in the eye of reaſon, is their manner of thinking, not their rank. A grandee has frequently the prejudices of the meaneſt mechanic. There are ſome here, who cannot bear the

* Vulgus autem tam chlamydatos quàm coronatos voco: non enim colorem veſtium quibus prætexta corpora ſunt aſpicio, oculis de homine non credo. SENECA.

the ſight of a Frenchman with tranquillity. The Engliſh are vehement in all their paſſions. The antipathy to our manners is ſo ſtrong in ſome of them, that a father has been known to diſinherit his ſon for wearing a bag-wig. What weakneſs, what madneſs are not men capable of!

The bulk of the Engliſh nation bear an inveterate hatred to the French, which they do not always take the pains to conceal from us: I am ſorry, for the honour of ours, I am obliged to allow that our thoughts of the Engliſh are hardly more moderate. We are indeed more cautious in our diſcourſe; and perhaps by looking cloſely into the matter, it would be found, that this hatred is more univerſal and violent in them: but let us ſincerely acknowledge, that ours is always too ſtrong not to be unreaſonable.

I am not ſurprized that particular perſons ſhould hate one another: ſome are wicked, and therefore hate the good; others have been offended, and reſentment rather proves the weakneſs than the wickedneſs of the ſoul. But that whole nations ſhould hate each other, (tho' the example of the Romans and Carthaginians, and even the experience of all times has taught us, that they are all more or leſs ſubject to thoſe antipathies and averſions) is, in my opinion, the greateſt cauſe of ſhame to human nature. The moſt deplorable conſequence of national averſions, is, that, let them be ever ſo unjuſt, the honeſt people are liable

liable to them: they ſuffer themſelves to be blinded like the reſt by their prejudices. My lord ** a perſon of the greateſt probity, being at Paris, could never prevail on himſelf to ſit at table with a Frenchman. Monſieur ** could never ſpeak calmly of the Engliſh. Mr. ADDISON, who has very unjuſtly placed GUY PATIN among our beſt writers, had juſt reaſon to complain of the unworthy manner this pretended philoſopher has ſpoken of the Engliſh in his letters: where he is not ſatisfied with declaring, *that they are a people which he abhors*; but adds, that *he looks on them among the other nations of* Europe, *as wolves among the different ſpecies of animals.* I would willingly make an honourable attonement in the name of my country for ſuch an injury, without fear of its being diſavowed; if ſuch authors any where deſerved the leaſt regard. GUY PATIN is juſtly fallen among us into the contempt, which his prejudices of all kinds ought neceſſarily to draw on him.

The frequent wars between the two nations have kindled this reciprocal hatred, which has ſo long ſubſiſted: their rivalſhip and jealouſy in trade prevent its being extinguiſhed in times of peace. If our neighbours carry this hereditary hatred to a greater length than we, 'tis partly the effect of their policy, which is very induſtrious in fomenting it. They think it their intereſt to render odious a power that allarms them: ſuch were the principles of king WILLIAM. Writers, whom he kept in pay, have

have filled the nation with the ſame principles, and the Engliſh have too well found their account in following them, to think of changing their notions. By their continual uneaſineſs, they ſeem to think that we are in regard to them what the Perſians were to the Athenians; that the king of France is the great king: hence this invincible averſion to the people who obey him, whom they ſuppoſe that they alone prevent from giving laws to the reſt of Europe. How is this dread reconcileable to the contempt they affect to throw on us? Had Sir RICHARD STEEL any reaſon for repreſenting the French ſo formidable, if it be true, as he aſſures us, *that they will always tremble to meet the Engliſh ſword in hand?* Theſe fall into many contradictions in regard to us. They fear, and yet deſpiſe us: we are the nation they pay the greateſt civilities to, and yet love the leaſt: they condemn, and yet imitate us, they adopt our manners by taſte, and blame them thro' policy.

Let us, Sir, leave to the mob the ridicule of thoſe national hatreds: let us not eſpouſe the paſſions, that are induſtriouſly inſtilled into them: they ſtand in need of them, ſince reaſon is not ſufficient for their guide. Theſe ſentiments with the multitude hold the place of zeal for the public good: they do thro' hatred of their neighbours, what they would never do for the love of their country. Such are men; and policy conſiſts in reaping benefit from their vices, as well as from their virtues.

tues. It employs their reaſon, prejudices, zeal, paſſions, every thing in a word, to attain the propoſed end: but by turning private vices into public benefits, it does not juſtify them. The people of every nation are ſo many ſocieties, which make part of the great one: and as each of them has its particular intereſts, ſo likewiſe they have one in common, which is that of humanity: and this is the firſt of all. Humanity is not leſs reſpectable in the ſtranger than in the compatriot. As Engliſhmen, or Frenchmen, let us ſerve our country: as men, let us treat one another as brethren. Let us bear no hatred to any but thoſe who, of whatever country they happen to be, dare break thro' the ſacred bands, that bind men together.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER VI.

To the Abbé DU BOS;

Perpetual ſecretary to the French Academy;

On the quakers of England.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

WHatever graces and embelliſhments the illuſtrious author of the Philoſophical Letters has diſplay'd in thoſe which he wrote on

on the quakers of England; do not imagine that he has any where deviated from truth. His portraits are as faithful as agreeable, and I would not adviſe any body to retouch the pictures painted by his hand. However, ſince you require a ſerious detail of every thing that relates to thoſe pretended reformers of the goſpel, I think I can ſend you nothing more inſtructive on the ſubject than the apology for the doctrine and morals of this ſect *, which has been tranſlated into all the polite languages of Europe.

You will find that this work is writ in Engliſh, in a pure, plain and elegant ſtyle. As to the ſubſtance of it, 'tis ſaid that the Engliſh divines of the different ſects, who are ſmartly handled in it, have not as yet publiſhed any good anſwer to it. The quakers have the higheſt ideas imaginable of this book. I have heard my lord WALDEGRAVE ſay, that they ſent a French tranſlation of it to cardinal FLEURY, accompanied with a letter, wherein they expreſs the greateſt eſteem of this miniſter for his probity; a moſt remarkable inſtance of homage from a ſett of men and ſtrangers, who value themſelves on never flattering any, not even ſovereigns.

The quakers are in truth one of the moſt ſingular ſects, that have as yet appear'd. My ſhoemaker is one of the great divines of the congregation, and one of thoſe who ſpeak of-

teneſt

* By Robert Barclay, a Scotchman.

teneſt and beſt at their meetings: * among his apprentices, he has one who may one day become an excellent man in controverſy. The book I ſend you is a preſent from my hoſier: he flatter'd himſelf that it might make ſome impreſſion on me: he is an enlightened man, not leſs zealous in propagating his enthuſiaſm than in carrying on his trade.

Not long ſince, a very rich widow of diſtinction, ſeduced by BARCLAY's book, embraced his doctrine. The ſpirit, to uſe their term, ſeized her at once, and has not ſince left her. She ſpends her life at preſent in travelling over England and Scotland, diſperſing her riches in all places where ſhe preaches her goſpel. Equally fanatical and charitable, ſhe ſeduces the weak, and relieves the diſtreſſed. The apology for the quakers muſt give you a high idea of their morals, tho' certain articles denote more lowneſs of mind than ſeverity of manners. You will ſee that they are not permitted:

I. To beſtow on men the titles of holineſs, majeſty, eminence, excellence, grace, &c: nor, in a word, to make any compliment, that may look like flattery.

II. To kneel, bow, or even uncover themſelves to any man.

III. To

* The famous George Fox, whom the quakers regard as their founder, was a ſhoemaker of Mancheſter, who preach'd at Derby in 1650.

III. To uſe any ſuperfluities in dreſs, or any thing that ſerves only for ornament or vanity.

IV. To game, hunt, go to plays, recreations, &c: which they ſay ſuit not with the ſilence, gravity, and wiſdom of Chriſtians.

V. To ſwear on the goſpel, not only in vain and in common diſcourſe, but even before a magiſtrate.

VI. To reſiſt thoſe who attack them, to wage war, or to fight in any cauſe whatſoever.

In conſequence of theſe principles they are all honeſt folks. They are the only fanatics at this day, who do not try to diſturb the ſociety, and breath nothing but peace and tranquillity: which is the more aſtoniſhing, as they took their riſe amidſt the fury of the civil wars; and as their primitive apoſtles were the moſt implacable enemies to royalty.

Tho' the manner of dreſs of the men is always plain and remote from all pomp or ſhew; the women are much relaxed of late in this point of diſcipline. They are now come to wear ſilks, ribbons and laces; and there is little difference between them and others of their ſex, but that they do not admit any faſhions that can in the leaſt offend modeſty. And what do they not gain by rejecting them! Women cannot poſſibly invent any ornaments that embelliſh them as much as their virtue.

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I am ſorry I have not a copy of the letter, which the quakers ſent to cardinal FLEURY: it muſt be a curious piece. I have ſeen ſome of theirs that are very laconic, and in which is ſeen that noble ſimplicity that approaches ſo near the ſublime. The prejudices againſt them hinder their having juſtice done them in many things. Moreover it muſt be allowed, that while we admire what is remote from us in time and place, we are but little ſtruck with what paſſes in our days and under our eyes. If we had remaining to us from ſome people of Greece, a letter like that which the quakers of England wrote to king JAMES II. on his acceſſion to the crown, what a high opinion ſhould we not entertain of it! What virtue, ſhould we ſay, muſt not thoſe men have had, who dared to write to their ſovereigns in ſuch a ſtyle! Let us ſay more; if thoſe, whoſe counſel this unfortunate prince followed, had ſpoke to him with as much wiſdom, courage and ſincerity; he would never perhaps have been obliged to abandon his kingdoms; and his family might be at this day on the throne. You will judge of this by the letter itſelf, which is ſhort and deſerves to be preſerved.

"THeſe are to teſtify our concern to
" thee for our friend Charles, whom
" we hope thou wilt imitate in all things
" honeſt.

" We

" We are informed, that thou art not of " the religion of the country, no more than " we: wherefore we may reaſonably expect " that thou wilt grant us the ſame liberty " which thou takeſt for thyſelf.

" We hope, that in this, and in all other " things, thou wilt procure the good of thy " people: which will oblige us to pray that " thy reign may be long and happy."

I have the honour to be,
Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER VII.

To the Marquis DU T**;

On converſation with the fair ſex; on foreign travel; and remarks on the Clubs of England.

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD,

THE Engliſh, unleſs when in love, fear the company of women, as much as the French delight in it: they think the fair ſex are made only to take poſſeſſion of their hearts, and ſeldom or never to afford any amuſement to their minds. They prefer the pleaſure of toaſting their healths in a tavern, to that of chatting with them in a circle.

They treat them, as if they had been as much of another ſpecies as of another ſex. For the moſt part they look on them as good for nothing but to diſſipate their vapours, or eaſe the fatigue of buſineſs.

Such of them as have reſided at Paris, endeavour to juſtify their nation in this reſpect, by ſaying that the women in England are not ſo amuſing as in France. But ſuppoſing this to be fact, is it not the fault of the men? There are certain defects in both ſexes, the blame of which ought leſs to be laid to the charge of that liable to it, than to the other which is the cauſe of it. If there are greater Agrémens found in the converſationof the French women, 'tis not becauſe they have more wit, but becauſe it has been better exerciſed. The preſence of one man here is ſufficient to impoſe ſilence on a whole circle of women. At Paris, a Petit-maitre, who is not quite grown to man's eſtate, is able to make a dozen Belles move all together that pretty inſtrument called a tongue. But the Engliſh women are neither to be commended nor blamed for their taciturnity: they are ſilent only on account of the confuſion they are under in company; and this confuſion ariſes purely from their not being accuſtomed to it. 'Tis leſs their fault than that of the men, who neglect them too much, and in whom the dangerous habit of drinking deſtroys the delicacy of ſentiments, and perhaps even the deſire of pleaſing. Thoſe who are too much addicted to the pleaſures of the bottle,

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are not well diſpoſed to the converſation of women: they are ſeldom amorous, and generally libertins.

The Engliſh loſe a great deal in converſing ſo little with the ſex, whom nature has endowed with the graces, and whoſe company has conſtant charms, and a certain ſweetneſs not to be found in that of men. The converſation of women poliſhes and ſoftens our behaviour: by the habit we acquire of endeavouring to pleaſe them, we contract a tone of voice equally agreeable to both ſexes.

The men are over-negligent of themſelves: among them all converſation languiſhes, or ends in diſputes. In order to command eſteem from one another, they ſtrive on both ſides to gain a ſuperiority; and thus they give reciprocal offence. None of them will bear to be run down, and they conclude by hating him they have not been able to overcome. Thoſe who have the moſt wit, do not ſufficiently reflect, that others are never ſo well pleaſed with us, as when we give them room to be ſatisfied with themſelves.

With regard to women, we take a ſurer way to gain their eſteem: we ſtudy to pleaſe them, and we ſucceed. 'Tis the ſenſe of what one ſex owes to the other, that inſpires that inſinuating tone of voice, and affectionate behaviour, in which true politeneſs conſiſts, and the habit of which is not to be contracted but in the company of women. The cuſtom of living with what is moſt valuable in both ſexes,

makes the pleaſure and happineſs of life. The manner of ſpeech and dreſs equally point out thoſe perſons, who have not been in the way of converſing with women. And 'tis by too much neglecting this cuſtom, that the Engliſh have a certain diſagreeable bluntneſs in their character. Even thoſe who come to Paris with the advantage of ſpeaking our language eaſily, aſtoniſh us by an air of confuſion, which ſeldom quits them. And the cauſe is very plain: ſome of them, after quitting the univerſities, come to London, and ſpend their time in coffee-houſes, taverns, and thoſe other places ſo pernicious to youth, by equally corrupting the heart and underſtanding. Others are ſent to ſtudy the manners of foreign countries, before they are acquainted with their own: which is another inconveniency. The deſign of travelling ſhould be in ſearch of wiſdom: and thoſe who have no notion of it, are very unlikely to find it out. The moſt part of the governors, to whoſe care thoſe young folks are committed, are not good guides: they cannot give what they have not. From the colleges whence they are taken, they bring the vicious habit of ſpending their time in ſmoaking and drinking; and they cannot form their pupils to that politeneſs which they themſelves are ſtrangers to, and to the ways of the world, which they have never ſeen.

Some authors, and among others doctor JOSEPH HALL, one of the moſt illuſtrious Engliſh biſhops, have very much condemned the

the cuſtom of their nation, in ſending youth abroad before they are in a condition to reap any advantage from their travels. We have a French tranſlation of a book of his, intitled: *Quo Vadis? A juſt cenſure of travel, as it is commonly undertaken by the gentlemen of our nation.* 'Tis certain that the Engliſh travel more than any other people of Europe. How much ſo ever their riches facilitate this cuſtom, the ſea, which ſurrounds them, is perhaps the principal cauſe. They look on their iſle as a ſort of priſon: and the firſt uſe they make of their love of liberty, is to get out of it. I think one may ſafely ſay, that they would travel leſs, were they not inhabitants of an iſland.

The education of our youth is indeed different from that of this country, tho' not much better. They are ruined by being too ſoon thruſt into the world. At an age when their total ignorance frees them from all apprehenſions, 'tis dangerous to have no other tutors but women. At this day, as ſoon as a young man has quitted the univerſity, he is introduced into all ſorts of company; where his ſtupidity and petulance ſerve him inſtead of wit and merit. He never thinks of correcting thoſe ridiculous airs, which ſucceed with him. Far from bluſhing at paſſing for a Petit-maitre, he glories in a title, which might be taken for the true ſynonymous term to (FAT) an impertinent fool, if the abbé Girard had not demonſtrated that our language cannot furniſh one. In France the women

put the finiſhing hand to the education of youth. And thoſe who have their reaſons for taking up this employment, thoſe who have no other calling but that of training up a young man, and putting him into the world, are generally very dangerous acquaintance: one gets rid of them at a cheap rate, if he contracts but ridiculous habits.

The defects, to which the Engliſh are ſubject, are perhaps attended with fewer inconveniences to the community; of which light, ſtupid, thoughtleſs young people are the ſcourge. If we have ſo many who retain theſe vices in riper years, 'tis partly becauſe we are ſo little accuſtomed to travel. Our neighbours are wiſer than us in this reſpect. In Germany the eldeſt ſons of great houſes commonly make the tour of Europe: and thus thoſe who are deſtined for the higheſt employments, find in ſeeing other nations, wherewithall to enrich their underſtanding, form their manners, and become uſeful to their native country. The reaſon why the French are ſo full of prejudices, is that, for want of going abroad, they are ignorant of the different excellencies of the neighbouring nations. Our neighbours come to us, to learn our politeneſs: why do we not go to them, to learn the virtues peculiar to them? However, it may perhaps with the ſame juſtice be objected to the Engliſh, that they travel much without diveſting themſelves of their national prejudices, which are not leſs unreaſonable

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than ours; and even without quitting their vicious habits. If they imitate the manners of ſtrangers, 'tis frequently by humour and without choice, nor do they always hit upon the beſt part of them. Reſidence at Paris inſpires ſome of them with a taſte for luxury, but few learn ſobriety from the example of the Italians.

The little commerce the Engliſh have with the ſex on one hand, and on the other their inclination to intemperance, have given birth to all thoſe ſocieties or clubs that meet at public-houſes. *Our modern celebrated clubs*, ſays Mr. ADDISON, * *are founded upon eating and drinking*. Thence ſprung that great ſociety of Free-Maſons, which makes ſo much noiſe in Europe at preſent, and the revels of which are its chief myſteries: thence comes, that the Engliſh of all degrees, from the peer to the tradeſman, have their particular clubs. In vain have ſome affected to grace this ſort of aſſociations with the reſpectable name of academies; the time and place of meeting ſufficiently let us into the knowledge of their buſineſs. All thoſe ſocieties in a word, under the impoſing names of independents, LITERATI, VIRTUOSI, &c. are nothing more than clubs of topers: and after the pleaſures of the table, they ſeldom reliſh any but thoſe of gaming, or perhaps others of a more dangerous nature. Their chief academical exerciſes

* Spectator, No. IX.

are pretty nearly the ſame with ſome that are mention'd in the life of ALEXANDER. At the funeral games, which he cauſed to be celebrated on the death of CALANUS, he appointed a combat of drinkers, and prizes for the victorious; of which there died near forty on the ſpot, and the conqueror himſelf did not ſurvive his victory three days.*

People here vaſtly affect to be popular, and in order to appear ſuch they even proſtitute themſelves to the vileſt of the populace. A gentleman begs as a favour to be admitted into a club of chairmen; and ſometimes the greateſt men of the realm diſdain not to receive the loweſt of plebeians among them. I will cite you an example, within my own knowledge.

A wine-merchant, now very rich, began his fortune in one of thoſe London public-houſes ſo convenient for young folks, and where the vice that draws them thither, prevents their being nice in regard to the wine they are ſerved with. This publican's complaiſance for youth, and his dexterity in metamorphoſing Portugal wines into French, ſoon enabled him to take one of the moſt noted and expenſive taverns of the town; which the greateſt men of the kingdom ſtill frequent.

There

* Quæ gloria eſt capere multum? Cum penes te palma fuerit, & propinationes tuas ſtrati ſomno ac vomitantes recuſaverint, cum ſuperſtes toto convivio fueris, cum omnes viceris virtute magnifica, & nemo tam capax vini fuerit, vinceris a dolio. Senec. Epiſt. Lib. XII.

There he became ſo rich in a few years, that he quitted the troubleſome buſineſs of retail, and turn'd wholeſale wine-merchant. Immediately theſe ſame lords, for whom he had often filled a glaſs of wine, incorporated him into one of their ſham academies. And 'tis not impoſſible, that by means of his own riches and their protection, he may one day become a member of parliament for the city of London; and then, in order to make a figure, he may declaim both againſt them and the miniſtry.

Although thoſe different clubs tend all to the ſame end, yet they have each their particular by-laws. If in antient times the veſtals at Rome were obliged to keep up the ſacred fire; in like manner there is a venerable order here, who have made themſelves a law to ſacrifice continually to BACCHUS: the temple muſt never be without prieſts; each has his hours of duty; ſome for the day, others for the night. Thoſe of the hotteſt zeal, may freely go and offer ſacrifice as oft, and continue as long as they think proper. Whoever has been once admitted, is ſure, at what time ſoever his fit of devotion ſeizes him, to find ſome of the fraternity employed in the ſervice of the deity they revere, and the altar conſtantly loaded with new offerings. In this ſanctuary they make uſe of an incenſe not quite ſo fragrant as that of Arabia: viz. that which exhales from the plant formerly called the Nicotian weed; and which in France is ſeldom

burnt

burnt but in guard-houſes. One thing is remark'd to the glory of theſe worthy aſſociates, which is, that they have not as yet felt the relaxation, which ſo ſoon creeps into the beſt eſtabliſhed ſocieties. It coſts ſomewhat to perſevere in the practice of virtue and temperance: but vicious habits are their own ſupport.

I have the honour to be,
My lord,
Your lordſhip's moſt humble, &c.

LETTER VIII.

To Monſieur DE BUFFONS,

On the great improvements made by the Engliſh in arts, ſciences, and mechanical trades; the methods whereby they excell other nations in them: with ſome remarks on their want of taſte.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

HOW has it happened that many illuſtrious men have given room to be reproached with having introduced quackery into the ſciences, which are the moſt contrary to it? To you I appeal, ſir, whoſe happy genius has penetrated into all the uſeful parts of them, and whoſe ſuperior judgment is capable of

of determining their value and connections. Metaphyſics excepted, which is the ſource of ſublime knowledge, and the mother of invention; do you not find that there is a ſenſible analogy between the moſt abſtruſe ſciences and the arts ſubject to the compaſs? The continual labour of the hands performs in the latter, what inceſſant application of the mind does in the former: nay perhaps the principal talent for ſucceeding in both kinds, is but a laborious patience: and is this patience a virtue that ought ſo vaſtly to flatter our ſelf-love, or in regard to which it is eaſy to impoſe on any other eyes but thoſe of the vulgar?

There are many arts and ſciences, in which a perſon is ſure to diſtinguiſh himſelf by a conſtant application: all depends on beginning early, and ſpending time enough on them. It is no longer a wonder to ſee children of ten years of age dance on the ſtage, or play on ſome inſtruments; and we have no greater reaſon to be ſurprized at ſeeing others of the ſame age reſolve problems: the former would have done the ſame with the latter, if inſtead of the principles of muſick, they had been taught EUCLID's elements. A celebrated Italian author tells us, that he had ſeen a ſhepherd, who uſed to divert himſelf by throwing up eggs into the air, and catching them without breaking; and that he had attain'd ſuch a degree of perfection in this exerciſe, that he could play with four at a time for ſeveral minutes together. *I do not remember*, continues he,

he, *to have ever obſerved a more ſerious air than that of this man; who by dint of application to this trifling diverſion, was become as grave as a ſenator: and 'tis very probable that the ſame daily attention properly applied might have made him an abler mathematician than* ARCHIMEDES.

Tho' we ſhould appear raſh to thoſe very perſons whom we intend to inſtruct, let us cloſely examine the moſt part of thoſe men who appear ſo great to us: poſſibly they have raiſed themſelves ſo high above others, only by being more laborious. Nature has been more equal in the diſtribution of her gifts, than is generally imagined. Labour frequently makes all the difference between the ſenſible and the great man. Not that I would refuſe to great men, of what kind ſoever, due reſpect and praiſe. I only intend to encourage others to try their ſtrength, in order to merit the like. My chief aim is to point out the advantages of ſtudy and labour; the two only ways that lead to a brilliant reputation in arts and ſciences: and to attain it, nothing is wanting to ſeveral people but a ſufficient knowledge of their own abilities. Some thro' diffidence enter not the liſts, others miſs the prize purely by not having uſed their utmoſt efforts.

I cannot give a more ſtriking example of what I advance than that of the Engliſh. This people is of all others known, the moſt impatient under every thing uneaſy to them, and at the ſame time the moſt conſtant in what they

propoſe

propoſe to themſelves. 'Tis by this continual application, and this indefatigable courage, that the Engliſh ſurpaſs other nations in the ſciences grounded on calculations, as well as in the arts that depend on the rule and compaſs. The ſame difference that lies between common Geometricians and NEWTON, is found between our French workmen and an artiſt ſuch as GRAHAM. If the mathematician, by the depth of his meditations, and the laws of his calculus, has determined the form and motions of this vaſt univerſe; the other, no leſs inventive in his art, has contrived that curious inſtrument, which, in the hands of our academians, has lately diſcovered to us the true figure of the earth.

It muſt be allowed to the honour of the Engliſh, that they have the glory of being the firſt improvers of the moſt extenſive branch of our ſure knowledge; I mean experimental philoſophy, of which lord chancellor BACON laid down the precepts above a century ago, and in which HARVEY, BOYLE, NEWTON, and dr. HALES, * with whom you are ſo well acquainted, have made ſuch beautiful and great diſcoveries. The reaſon that mankind had made ſo little progreſs in the knowledge of nature, for two thouſand years, is that they had taken bad roads to arrive at it. BACON ſaw this, and reſolved to ring the bell to call all thoſe of his days together, and put them

* M. de Buffons has tranſlated dr. Hales's Vegetable Statics.

them into the right way. This is the ingenious expreſſion he makes uſe of concerning his Book of the *Progreſs and Advancement of Learning*, which he wrote in Engliſh, and wiſhed to ſee tranſlated into a language common to all the learned in Europe. *Wherefore*, ſays he, *ſince I have only taken upon me to ring a bell, to call other wits together; it cannot but be conſonant to my deſire to have the bell heard as far as can be.*

As for mechanical arts, they can flouriſh no where without the ſciences, from which they flow as from their ſource; they ſurpaſs the arts of taſte, in being of ſure and invariable utility to mankind. Such are the fruits which a trading nation reaps from navigation; ſuch the advantages of a canal, which communicates to a whole country the plenty of neighbouring provinces, and the riches of the two extremities of the earth. And indeed how great muſt be the benefit that would reſult to France from a canal in Burgundy, that would join the SAONE to the SEINE or the LOIRE, and conſequently the Ocean to the Mediterranean! ſuch is in fine, in a part much neglected among us, but the abuſes of which I hope to ſee corrected by your example; ſuch, I ſay, is the product of a foreſt well taken care of. By an equally honourable and uſeful induſtry, private advantage, and the good of the ſtate are procured together. A private perſon, who by ſucceſsful trials has improved his land, cannot increaſe his income, without doing real

ſervice

ſervice to his country: in all thoſe caſes, public intereſt is ſo connected with private, that they are abſolutely inſeparable.

On the contrary, arts of taſte have not properly ſpeaking a ſettled intrinſic value. Their price changes according to the modes, which likewiſe change according to the times and the caprices of men. The Dreſden Porcelaine, which has lowered the value of that of Japan and China, will ſoon have its turn. The moſt beautiful cabinets, with balls for feet, are now ſold at a very low price. In a word, we can do without painting and ſculpture; but we cannot abſolutely do without the arts, which fertilize the land, nor thoſe which defend us from the injuries of the weather. Every reaſonable Frenchman will agree, that the art by which we go to China to exchange the ſuperfluities of Europe for gold, which is the riches of all ages, is preferable to the art, which teaches us to deſtroy this ſame gold by ſpreading it on our cloaths and poſt-chaiſes.

And what people is better ſkilled in the art of navigation, and more ſenſibly feel the effects of it by plenty of all things, than the Engliſh? They were the inventors of moſt of its uſeful inſtruments: for not to mention the compaſs, of which they claim the invention, we owe to them the quadrant and the new inſtrument for taking altitudes, which you have had from hence for your private uſe, and which the learned and vigilant miniſter who is at the head of our marine, has lately ſent to

all the ports of France. They were likewiſe the firſt that built ſhips after deſigned plans; and erected thoſe ingenious ſtoves for bending timber, which we now begin to uſe with great ſucceſs.

This people, equally induſtrious and laborious, have a great advantage over their neighbours in all things which require a good deal of time to compleat. England has more than any other country of thoſe machines ſo uſeful to the ſtate, which really multiply men by leſſening their work; and by means of which one man can execute what would take up thirty without ſuch aſſiſtance. Thus by turning a wheel, a boy of ten years old gives to a hundred things made of ſteel, all at the ſame time, that beautiful poliſh, which few of our French workmen can imitate. Thus in the coal-pits at NEWCASTLE, a ſingle Perſon can, by means of an engin equally ſurprizing and ſimple, raiſe five hundred tons of water to the height of a hundred and eighty feet. The draining of this water facilitates the digging of the coal out of the pit; which coal is of the greateſt advantage to the nation, by abundantly ſupplying the deficiency of wood for firing. This ſame machine has another uſe: it furniſhes at the ſame time a country that wants water, with a river that may be called artificial.

'Tis not in great works alone that the Engliſh excell: the moſt common trades here ſeem to partake of the perfection of arts. In all

all lock-work, which is ſo rudely performed in our country, I equally admire the patience and induſtry of the Engliſh workman. RAVECHET does not finiſh the hinge of a gold ſnuff-box with greater care, than they do that of a cloaths-preſs here. With regard to the neatneſs and ſolidity of work of all kinds, they ſucceed better in the leaſt towns of England, than in the moſt conſiderable cities of France. I have ſeen here, in country places, common hands work and put the ſeveral parts of a piece of joiner's work together with a degree of exactneſs and propriety, which the beſt maſter-joiners of Paris would find it difficult to come near.

The Engliſh artiſan has one quality, extremely commendable, and peculiar to him, which is, never to ſwerve from the degree of perfection in his trade, which he is maſter of: whatever he undertakes, he always does as well as he can. The French workman is far from deſerving this commendation. His reputation is ſcarcely eſtabliſhed, when he grows negligent: whatever faults there are in his work, more frequently proceed from his deſire of cheating, than from his ignorance. On the contrary, the care an Engliſhman conſtantly takes to do his work well, ſeems to beſpeak in him a notion of the exact, which ſuffers him not to depart from it. In this reſpect, it may be ſaid, that the meaneſt workman here has noble thoughts of the trade he profeſſes. But at the ſame time it ſhould ſeem

as if the idea of the exact is the only one the Engliſhman has of the beautiful. The genteel eſcapes him: he requires ſtronger features, to ſtrike him. There is nothing which is not ſuſceptible of the elegance of the out-lines. For us it is not ſufficient that an elbow chair be convenient, we require further that its ſhape be agreeable. Our appartments are effectually adorned with what ſerves only to furniſh thoſe of London. The Engliſh workmen take no leſs pains than ours in ſeeking this gracefulneſs in the ſhape of things: but notwithſtanding all their endeavours, they have not been able to attain it. As much as I admire their invention in mechanical arts, I am equally offended at all their productions in the arts of taſte. The rule and compaſs, which guide them in the one, are only troubleſome to them in the others. Does not an over-ſcrupulous exactitude cool the genius? The exact is a near neighbour to the ſtiff: and what renders the acceſs to the graces ſo difficult, is perhaps, that it is impoſſible to gain it without exactitude; and if this alone be attended to, one runs the riſk of receding from it.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER IX.

To Monſieur FRERET,

Perpetual ſecretary to the Academy of Inſcriptions and Belles-Lettres;

On paraſites and their encouragers.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

IN this nation, haughtier perhaps than is uſually thought, one of the moſt mortifying conditions is that of a chaplain to a great man. The title with which this eccleſiaſtic is inveſted, is the very thing that debaſes him: he obtains the honour of being admitted to the table of his lord, I might as well have ſaid his maſter, only on condition of acting the loweſt of parts, that of a paraſite, or, which is much the ſame thing, that of a ſlave. The peers of the realm, as dukes, earls, &c. have each a certain number of chaplains, that is to ſay a better ſort of ſervants, who inſtead of wearing his livery, wear that of the clergy, and depend more on their patron than on the church.

Thus the Engliſh author, who has beſt deſcribed the manners of his nation, ſpeaks of an unreaſonable cuſtom, which great families expect their chaplains will ſtrictly obſerve.

I have often wondered, ſays he, *at the indecency of diſcarding the holieſt man from the table, as ſoon as the moſt delicious parts of the entertainment are ſerved up.---It was uſual for the prieſt in old times to feaſt upon the ſacrifice, nay the honey-cake, while the hungry laity looked upon him with great devotion; or as the late lord* ROCHESTER *deſcribes it in a very lively manner:*

And while the prieſt did eat, the people ſtared.

At preſent the cuſtom is inverted: the laity feaſt, while the prieſt ſtands by as an humble ſpectator. This neceſſarily puts the good man upon making great ravages on all the diſhes that ſtand near him, and diſtinguiſhing himſelf by voraciouſneſs of appetite, as knowing that his time is ſhort.---In this caſe I know not which to cenſure, the patron or the chaplain, the inſolence of power, or the abjectneſs of dependance. *

You will agree with me, ſir, that the arrogance of which mr. ADDISON accuſes the great men of England in this place, and the debaſement, with which he reproaches the clergy of the ſecond rank, agree ill with the encomiums of modeſty and generoſity, which in other places he ſo profuſely beſtows on his countrymen, and particularly with what he ſays of them in the paſſage of his works mention'd in your laſt letter. As he was the ſon of a miniſter, he muſt be more ſenſible than ano-

* Tatler, Vol. IV. No. 255.

another of the contempt, with which the Engliſh uſe their church-men: and yet poſſibly he has not told the true cauſe of it. 'Tis, if I miſtake not, in the contempt the great men have for religion, that we are to ſeek the ſource of that which they dare to ſhew towards its miniſters: and this misfortune is the unhappy conſequence of the licentiouſneſs, which is here authorized by the government.

In France we have not the ſcandal to ſee perſons inveſted with the moſt venerable character acting by their ſtate of life the moſt deſpicable of all perſonages. Perhaps there are more flatterers there than any where elſe, ſince unhappily flattery is a national vice among us: but yet at leaſt they are taken indifferently in all degrees of the community. I am ſorry it is true, that the progreſs of vice has followed that of politeneſs. In former times, when the minds of men were more ſimple, and their hearts leſs corrupted, great men had their fools to make them laugh: at preſent they have their blockheads to flatter them.

In France, there is commonly at the tables of the rich one blockhead upon the eſtabliſhment. I do not pretend to ſay there is but one: pretty frequently, the whole company is much of the ſame ſtamp, not excepting the perſon who keeps the table. But here I confine myſelf to the blockhead, who is beſt regaled. The maſter of the houſe exerts all his wit for this fellow: 'tis a hireling paraſite,

who liſtens to him while he talks of things he does not underſtand, and admires him when he knows not what he ſays; who begs the applauſe of the reſt for him, and by a hearty laugh puts them in tune to reliſh his wretched pleaſantry: 'tis in a word the head of the whole band of blockheads.

Such as have made their fortune in England are uſually wiſer; their chief thoughts are bent on encreaſing it: they take pride in no other wit but that of multiplying their riches, and this is an effect of their good ſenſe. They reſign to the great all the ridicule that pomp and vanity draw after them. Inſtead of imitating their extravagance, they make advantage of it. They do not ſet up for men of taſte, when they have none, but ſtill continue good merchants; and their children follow the ſame dealings that enriched their parents. How very beneficial muſt ſuch a prudent conduct prove both to themſelves and to the ſtate!

'Tis but too true, that fortune's favorites among us are far from being ſo rational: many times, aſhamed of the condition to which they owe their wealth, they quit it as ſoon as they find an opportunity. They do not confine themſelves, whether in their houſes or equipages, to copying the luxury of perſons of quality; they more frequently outſtrip it, and thereby draw on themſelves at the ſame time, both the jealouſy of the great whom they ſtrive to eclipſe, and the hatred of the people whom they

they ſhock by the inſolence of their pomp. They have moreover the madneſs of affecting to be witty; and how can they avoid thinking themſelves ſo? They are eternally beſet with fawning paraſites, who ſtudy their ridicules with the ſole view of offering incenſe to them. The celebrated author of the *Enfant prodigue* could not find a better method of expoſing the bad company EUPHEMON kept, and the friends he had choſen, than by making him ſay to himſelf: *they praiſed me to my face.* This is one of thoſe ſtrokes, which point out the great maſter.

On both ſides, how contemptible are the parts acted both by thoſe who diſcover ſo ridiculous a vanity, and thoſe who ſhew ſuch mean complaiſance for them. Vain-glorious rich, you are betray'd when flattered: and how is it poſſible that the ſmoak of ſuch vile incenſe riſes to your heads! Baſe flatterers, you pay dear for the careſſes made ye. They are ſold ye for applauſe, duty, and ſubmiſſion. *Oh! how much more excellent are you,* ſays the wiſe EPICTETUS to thoſe who cannot condeſcend to ſuch meanneſs, *you do not praiſe him whom you believe not worthy of your praiſes: you are not obliged to bear his inſolence, and the haughty manner in which he treats his gueſts: ſuch is your gain.*

What contempt! what hatred ought not mankind to have for thoſe vile creatures! Whoever is baſe enough to live by this infamous trade, would be equally capable of aſ-

ſaſſinating the perſon he flatters, if he had the reſolution to do the deed, and found his intereſt in it. But ſuch is the blindneſs of the great and opulent, that they look on every thing as their due: they are leſs deceived by others, than they deceive themſelves. Had there been a tribunal erected againſt flattery, there would be no proſecutions of the criminals: becauſe none would complain of being flattered.

No wonder, that ſo many prefer the company of a blockhead to that of a man of ſenſe: the narrower mens talents are, the greater their vanity. The one flatters their ſelf-love by the ſuperiority they perceive they have over him; the other would but mortify it by being compelled to acknowledge his ſuperiority over them. We love thoſe with whom we may remonſtrate; and fear thoſe who have it in their power to pronounce judgment againſt us: thus it is that blockheads are in requeſt, and become the darlings of thoſe who find them inferior to themſelves in parts.

After the example of women jealous of their beauty, who are careful in chooſing companions, whoſe uglineſs may ſerve as a foil to their charms; thoſe called wits, practice this ſort of coquettery: they have commonly a blockhead in their train, whom they ſtile their friend, and who in reality is but their ſetter-off. They know the effect of contraſts; and it is in order to ſhine forth to greater advantage, that they affect the company

pany of a man the moſt devoid of knowledge and underſtanding they can find. The block-head is always ready to admire: he is the Merry-Andrew, who holds forth to the mob on the great merit of the ſtrong man's wonderful feats. He is an entity much reſembling thoſe birds that are taught to talk, and which they themſelves train up to repeat all the fine things they deſire to have ſaid of them. In fine he is a flatterer, whoſe incenſe, fulſome as it is, inebriates and hinders them from ſeeing their own defects. Yet the ſtupidity of thoſe admirers injures them more than the jealouſy of their rivals. TACITUS has ſaid it: *praiſers are the moſt prejudicial ſort of enemies.* There is no country, where the greateſt men in other reſpects, have not the meanneſs to take up with ſuch low creatures. But all theſe puffs do bad ſervice to thoſe whoſe praiſes they ſound. Like to a trumpet, which is their ſymbol, they only make a diſagreeable or ſtunning noiſe.

You are in the right, ſir: we ſtand much in want of a LA BRUYERE and a MOLIERE to cenſure the manners of our age. I find as much of truth as of ſtrength in the portrait you have drawn of it: your letter is full of thoſe ſtrokes, which equally do honour to the heart and mind. A maſculine virtue can alone inſpire this zeal for public good breeding, at a time when indecency is ſo much in faſhion, that whoſoever dares to declare himſelf

ſelf a libertine, is almoſt ſecure of paſſing for a philoſopher.

Vices ſtalk at this day with upright front! Perhaps they are not more enormous than thoſe of preceding ages; but they are more impudent. Paſſions ſtick too cloſe to man to expect rooting them out: it is not ſo with his ridicules; a lively portraiture of them in all their extravagance is ſometimes ſufficient to give him a diſguſt to them. I muſt own at the ſame time that they are like PROTEUS: purſue them in one ſhape, and they ſoon appear in another. Petits-maitres have ſucceeded the Marquis's. Phyſicians were formerly pedants briſtled with Greek and Latin: at preſent they are fops, who affect gallantry and bons Mots; and at leaſt divert their patients, if they do not cure them. Their directions are madrigals on the progreſs or cure of a diſtemper, wherein they cauſe the genteelneſs and agreeableneſs of their wit to be admired. One might make very diverting collections of them. Are not ſuch ridicules more ſhocking ſtill than thoſe of MOLIERE's phyſicians? The itch of pleaſantry, with which our nation has been ſo often reproached, has now catched the graveſt profeſſions: and decency of behaviour is no longer obſerved in any ſtate of life. The women have even ſhook off its yoke. What we call a ſtrain of gallantry, our fathers called a ſtrain of licentiouſneſs.

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We muſt not confound with the ill-nature of ſatyrs, thoſe innocent paintings of ridicules, the ſole intention of which is to correct them. There appear at preſent but too many of thoſe writings, more dangerous than the defects they find fault with, and the authors of which point leſs at vice itſelf than at the vicious. Particular ſatyrs are as pernicious, as a general cenſure of morals is beneficial to the community. He who ſeeks only to gratify the malignity of his readers, is a corrupter who deſerves puniſhment. He who attacks the ridicules, or the depravity of the morals of his age, is a virtuous citizen who fights for the public cauſe: and in this caſe he ought to deal with the vicious as ſoldiers with their enemies, fire on them in general, but take no particular aim.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER X.

To Monſieur DE LA CHAUSSÉE,

Member of the French Academy;

On unequal and clandeſtine marriages.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

PUblic diverſions are not ſo indifferent as many people ſuppoſe them: the ſtage has

has an influence on our morals, and it is not to be doubted that the liberty of that of London contributes in part towards the little regard the Engliſh have for what is called decency. Models are conſtantly preſented on it, which one paſſion or other eaſily determines a perſon to follow, from the moment he has ſhook off the yoke of ſhame. How much are we not indebted to you for bringing none on our ſtage, but thoſe the imitation of which is beneficial to the community! How glorious it is for an author, to have no reaſon to bluſh at his ſucceſs! Your pieces are a ſchool of the ſoundeſt morals.

This is the country, where unequal marriages are the moſt common: the curb of decency hinders but few of the Engliſh from following their caprices, or indulging their paſſions. If a maſter marries his ſervant-maid, a duke's daughter a foot-ſoldier, or an old rich widow a puppy, whoſe ſole merit is his youth; ſome few people will laugh, but the reſt will take no notice of it, and no-body will be ſurprized. Thoſe ladies whoſe birth gives them a rank at court, are not afraid of derogating, becauſe they cannot loſe it. This is a country of liberty, and this liberty is ſtretched ſo far as to do ſilly things almoſt without incurring cenſure. Decorum is little reſpected, and vice is render'd familiar.

Our laws have wiſely provided all poſſible means to prevent children marrying without the conſent of their parents, leſt they ſhould

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enter into engagements prejudicial to themſelves, and diſhonourable to their families. Youth is too blind, and too much abandoned to its paſſions, to diſcern its true intereſt. The laws of England are very different: they tend all to favour even the moſt indecent marriages. They do not require public notice and ceremony enough in an act, which, the more important it is to the contracting parties, the more it ought to concern thoſe to whom they belong.

As people may marry here in whatever place they will, I have been told that a miniſter, who was actually in priſon, had contrived, in order to get a livelihood, to hang out a board from his window, with theſe words: *Here marriages are performed cheap.* I am well aware that this will be looked on as a joke; I do not pretend even to throw any ſuſpicion on the wiſdom of the Engliſh legiſlators: doubtleſs they have had good reaſons for dictating the laws they have eſtabliſhed; but the abuſes of them are very pernicious. They authorize the wiles which the moſt profligate harlot can invent, in order to ſeduce a young man of family: they favour vice, and render indiſſoluble the ſhameful knot, by which ſhe has found means to bind him to her. One cannot be too much upon his guard in England againſt this ſort of women; they have a wonderful addreſs in laying ſnares for youth, and in ſome meaſure wiping off the ſcandal of their lives, which had ſepa-

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rated them from ſociety, by a marriage which reſtores them to it. Their moſt common craft indeed is to make the perſon drunk, whom they intend to hook in. Wine gives ſo much empire to our ſenſes over us, only becauſe it entirely deſtroys that of our reaſon.

In this condition a girl that deſigns to be the wife of a man, who would bluſh to own her for his miſtreſs, works him up to ſuch a pitch by her dangerous careſſes, that ſhe makes him declare, before witneſſes provided for that purpoſe, that he takes her to his wedded wife. Nay it frequently happens that he has no other intent in giving his conſent, but to carry on a joke: but here all joking on this ſubject becomes ſerious; the I WILL is taken literally. She who reſolves to be married, takes care to have a chaplain ready: the miniſter of the goſpel lends his aſſiſtance to this myſtery of iniquity: and what in our country would prove no more than a farce, reprehenſible by the civil magiſtrate, in England becomes an act authorized by the laws.

Thus it happens that a man, who went to bed very quietly and very drunk, in the morning finds himſelf married to a perſon for whom he has the utmoſt contempt. Such unions cannot well be ſuppoſed to produce good ſubjects to the ſtate. If men abandon themſelves to the brutality of their paſſions, 'tis incumbent on the laws to ſupply the prudence they are deficient in; and to prevent, as far as is conſiſtent with the good of the community,

community, a perſon from being made miſerable the reſt of his life by one moment's frailty. I am acquainted with two brothers, who, to their great regret, have been drawn into this ſnare by two ſiſters; and who perhaps aggravate their fault, inſtead of repairing it, by uſing their wives as their ſervants. This is to puniſh themſelves as much as them; 'tis adding one evil to another; 'tis the moſt cruel extremity, to which a man can poſſibly be reduced.

What has given me occaſion to write you this letter, is that a few days ago a gentleman of Lincoln, who fell into this misfortune, the next morning, reflecting on the folly he had committed, ſhot himſelf thro' the head. This is carrying the matter a little too far: how ſilly ſoever this marriage might have been, his ſelf-murther was ſtill a ſillier action; for, as LA FONTAINE ſays,

Mieux vaut goujat de bout, qu'empereur enterré.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

To Monſieur H * * *;

Containing remarks on affectation of ſingularity, exemplified in the Engliſh and French.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

THE difference between a perſon rendering himſelf illuſtrious, and making himſelf be talked of, cannot be better expreſſed than you have done it: I ſhould be ſurprized to ſee one of your age make ſuch a diſtinction, had I not known that you are born with thoſe happy talents, that do not permit one to miſtake the mark, to which he ought to point. You ſtill raiſe their value by the prudent uſe you make of them: and thereby you ſtrike out a difficult path indeed, but a ſure one to the pinacle of fame.

Without doubt no country in the world affords a greater number of ſingular men than England; and it ſeems no difficult taſk to aſſign the reaſon: the Engliſh make a merit at leaſt, if not a virtue, of this ſingularity. Here a man renders himſelf as illuſtrious by follies, which in other places would render him ridiculous, as by the moſt beneficial actions to ſociety. They love to make themſelves famous

famous at a ſmall expence. Hence it comes that one makes a merit of having a hunting equipage, and never going to the chace; and another with five thouſand pounds a-year affects to wear a coarſer cloath than that of his liveries. In ſhort, every body in this country piques himſelf on living up to his fancy. Thus among the great there are ſome who bluſh not for vices, ſcarcely pardonable in the meaneſt of the mob: thus among the common people, we ſee impudent fellows aſſume a pride, that even wealth and quality cannot excuſe.

The Engliſh eſteem this variety of humours and characters as an Encomium on their nation, and the effect of their liberty. Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE, mr. ADDISON, and generally all their authors have wrote its apology. They reproach us with being all of a piece; they ſay our nation is but a herd of cattle: and yet 'tis this pretended defect which makes us more ſociable at leaſt, if not more virtuous, than the Engliſh. I cannot diſcern the beauties of a variety of characters, the reſult of which is but vice and ridicule. The Greeks and Romans were, in my opinion, as free as the Engliſh can poſſibly be, and yet they never boaſted of ſingularity. Caprice was no merit among them: they chiefly valued themſelves on being the moſt knowing and reaſonable people of the earth.

I own, there are ſome commendable ſingularities, if we may give this name, which in

the French language conveys an idea of blame, to qualities that are real virtues. If the Engliſh diſtinguiſhed themſelves by ſuch only, we ought to take them for our maſters: but how far is London from being a good ſchool of morals for the reſt of Europe! The ſingularity, with which the Engliſh are reproached, what art ſo ever they employ to juſtify it, always proceeds from ſome irregularity of the mind, or ſome ambitious deſires lurking in the heart. One is willing to be talked of, and has not always wherewithal to gain his point by the different high-roads to merit. He who cannot tranſmit his name to poſterity by building a temple, burns that of Epheſus to immortalize himſelf.

It is not ſo difficult to be ſingular, as thoſe perſuade themſelves, who pride in appearing ſo: they need only puſh their character, whatever it be, to exceſs, and have no regard to decency: 'tis in every body's power to make himſelf remark'd, if he will run all riſks for that purpoſe. The people of ſenſe are enemies to ſingularity, they look on it as a defect, and therefore it is acted as the greateſt of all ridicules. *If thoſe*, ſays the Abbé DE BELGARDE, *who affect airs of ſingularity, did comprehend how ſhocking all affectation is, they would take great care to affect nothing.* We have a natural averſion to every counterfeit, and deſpiſe thoſe who cannot recommend themſelves otherwiſe than by a falſe imitation. I am ſorry that there is room for reproaching

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the Engliſh with this defect: it is contrary to the good ſenſe they value themſelves on. Good ſenſe and common ſenſe are the ſame thing; and 'tis not called common, becauſe it is found in the greateſt part of mankind, but becauſe it is the ſame in all thoſe who are endowed with it: and the ſame ſenſe ought naturally to lead them to the ſame way of life. But it muſt be allowed, that nothing is ſo ſcarce in all countries as common ſenſe. SENECA juſtly eſteems it as the firſt and moſt precious gift of philoſophy.

How can a man capable of reaſoning conſtrain himſelf all his life to act the diſtracted, and propoſe to himſelf the imitation of a defect, as the reſearch of a virtue? Tho' he ſhould actually purchaſe the reputation of a man of genius at this price, he would ſtill purchaſe it very dear. But it is the ſame caſe with all our follies, we pay for them more than they are worth. The comedy of the *Diſtrait* * can make no great impreſſion on any but the common part of the audience. Its fund, if I am not miſtaken, is vicious. Reaſonable people will no more laugh at a man, who has the misfortune to be hurried away by involuntary diſtractions, than at another who is ſubject to a vertigo. Comedy ſhould act ſuch defects only, as it may poſſibly correct. Pleaſantries beſtowed on a cripple, will be of juſt as much ſervice towards making him walk upright, as RENARD's piece will be to-

* A French play.

wards correcting a man born diſtracted. But if any one affect diſtraction, he it is, who ought not to be ſpared: the buſineſs ſome people make of ſeeming not to know what they do, proceeds purely from an apprehenſion of paſſing for men of the common ſtamp. They ſhould be made ſenſible, how far this wretched affectation debaſes them below thoſe, whom they take ſuch pains to avoid reſembling. Whoever would endeavour to impoſe on us, even tho' it were by appearing miſerable, deſerves to be unmaſked and expoſed to public laughter. Thus the *Malade imaginaire* is a ſubject truly theatrical. We love to ſee a man laugh'd out of his faults: but it is barbarity to mock his infirmities.

Singularity in dreſs generally denotes ſome defect in the underſtanding. *In accoutrements*, ſays MONTAGNE, *'tis puſillanimity to point one's ſelf out by ſome particular and uncommon faſhion.* In France we have a good number of folks, who fall under this cenſure, and matter not being laughed at, provided they cauſe themſelves to be taken notice of. The affectation of their behaviour hurts us, by appearing to be a cenſure on the received cuſtoms: and a ſingle perſon is not a proper match for the whole community. They are fond of paſſing for models, and they only excite the laughter or contempt of thoſe, whoſe eſteem they endeavour to uſurp. We laugh at the man, who, in order to ſhine forth more bright, makes uſe of a varniſh, which tar-

niſhes the luſtre of his merit: we deſpiſe a blockhead, who, without having the eſſential qualities of his pattern, dares to affect all his ridicules. 'Tis not through reaſon but folly, that moſt part of mankind go out of the common road. *The wiſeman ought inwardly to withdraw his ſoul from the croud, and keep it in liberty and a condition to form a ſound judgment of things: but as to outward appearance, he ought to follow the faſhions and forms in general uſe.** CARDANUS, eſteemed as a fool, was ſingular in his dreſs. SENECA attributes this thought to ARISTOTLE: *nullum magnum ingenium ſine mixtura dementiæ.* In conſequence of this maxim, which is in greater credit than it deſerves, ſome ſtudy to be ſingular, in order to paſs for men of genius: but in the moſt part of this claſs, as mr. BAYLE very juſtly remarks on the ſubject of CARDANUS, *'Tis much folly mixed with little ſenſe.*

It cannot be denied that the greateſt men always have in ſome reſpects the mark of human frailty. Without any difference in their organs from thoſe of common men, it is poſſible that thoſe ſtrong applications of the mind, which produce great diſcoveries in ſciences, and maſter-pieces in arts, permit them not to enter into all the little details of civil life. They neglect ſome as frivolous, others they reject as troubleſome. They would believe they compromiſed the ſuperiority they find they have

* Montagne.

above other men, if they allowed themſelves to be governed by example. But, as MONTAGNE ſays, *as it belongs to great poets only to make uſe of the licences of the art, ſo it is tolerable only in great and illuſtrious ſouls to aſſume a privilege above the common.* In thoſe extraordinary men great qualities ſo abſorb their defects, that they are hardly diſcernable. The ſun has its ſpots, but its ſplendor prevents our ſeeing them.

Happily for us, ſingularity is as rare a defect in France, as it is common in England: and it is to be hoped that thoſe who have tranſplanted this exotic into our ſoil, will fail of ſucceſs in propagating it. True it is, that there are reaſonable grounds to fear the worſt in this regard from the great commerce we entertain at preſent with this iſland. Nations more eaſily exchange their vices than their virtues. Our Petits-maitres in ſciences (for there are ſome of all kinds) very much affect Engliſh manners at this day. But it is not in the good part that they imitate them: generally ſpeaking, they have nothing Engliſh but their dreſs. One of our young fellows, after having read mr. ADDISON's ſpectators, and mr. POPE's works, ſaid one day to a friend: *now I think.* Our thinking entity was cloathed in green, his coat was without a plait, his hair without powder; and he had his hat on his head. *Well*, continued he, *how do you like me? Have I not the compleat air of an Engliſhman?* Several of our *literati* are already

inliſted

inliſted under the Engliſh banner: the Geometricians have ſet them the example. Theſe would have it, that the nation which eſteems geometry as the firſt of ſciences, is itſelf the firſt nation of Europe. How emphatically they extoll every thing that comes from this country! How zealouſly they ſtrive to make proſelites! If you believe this ſort of fanatics, there are no real men but the Engliſh: not a ſtep to be made in philoſophy or literature without the ſtudy of their language: it is, according to them, the key of all ſciences: they regard it as the only rich one, the Engliſh manner of ſpeaking as the only juſt one, and their way of living as the only one that is rational. It is not the fault of theſe gentlemen, that we do not borrow our manner of dreſs and eating from the Thames watermen.

I could wiſh that the only marks of diſtinction from the vulgar, were a more juſt way of thinking, a more rational conduct, and purer morals.* To abound in his own ſenſe is not a reaſon for gaining applauſe, when a man prefers his caprice and particular imaginations to the ſentiments of the wiſe, and the principles of reaſon. But the Engliſh have ſo high an opinion of their nation, that they glory in the leaſt thing that relates to their manners. They are not afraid to ſay, that they believe themſelves the firſt people of the world.

* Id agamus, ut meliorem famam ſequamur quam vulgus, non ut contrariam. SENECA.

Let us grant nevertheleſs, that there are caſes, wherein an affectation of ſingularity may be excuſable: it is ſometimes neceſſary to deceive mankind, in order to attain one's end. 'Tis in vain to have merit in the world, it is not ſufficient to make a fortune; there muſt be beſides, as the Italians ſay, *un poco di matto.* When a man has ſome mixture of the fool, it is the eaſier for him to diſtinguiſh himſelf from the croud of his competitors. The extraordinary fixes the eyes of the multitude, and the people are always ready to eſteem what aſtoniſhes them. How rare ſo ever good ſenſe may be, it has nothing remarkable in it: it is commended, but not ſought after. Shining qualities get the better of ſolid ones. A glaring vice makes more noiſe than the moſt eſſential virtues. In letters, in arms, and in a word in all kinds of life, a little quakery is requiſite to gain a reputation. It is eaſier to ſucceed with much craft without the leaſt merit, than with a great deal of merit without the leaſt craft. Nothing is ſo rare as that elevation of ſoul and courage of mind, which make a man reſolve to obtain nothing but by ſuch methods as he may publickly own; and to prefer an honeſt obſcurity to the falſe luſtre of an ill-acquired reputation. There are men, who are determined, at any price, to gain the attention of the public: but thoſe love a great better than a good reputation.

There

There are other caſes, wherein an air of ſingularity, either in conduct, or actions, may even dazzle and impoſe on the wiſe. You remember, ſir, to have read in the *pour et contre*, * the will of that Engliſhman, who dying without children, appointed *the hungry*, *the thirſty*, *the naked*, &c. for his heirs. God forbid I ſhould intend to leſſen the value of this good action; the memory of this charitable man ought to be reſpected by all good men: yet I have ſeen ſome Frenchmen too much aſtoniſhed at this will, and admire in this ſtranger what they would but barely approve in a compatriot. After all, what has this Engliſhman done, but what is daily done among us by thoſe, who leave their ſubſtance to hoſpitals and other poor! Wherefore it is the form, not the thing, that raiſes admiration: and indeed, we might never have heard of this will, if this Engliſhman, inſtead of employing a text of ſcripture, had made it in the uſual form. How eaſy it is to deceive us, and how often we take the appearance for the reality!

What I am moſt ſurprized at is, that ſingularity ſhould ſometimes be able to tarniſh the luſtre of royal majeſty. LEWIS the eleventh carried it even to the throne, where he was ſure of having the whole univerſe for ſpectators. In my opinion, hiſtorians were in the wrong to impute to nothing but his avarice the

* Tom. 1. pag. 65.

the coarſe coat and greaſy hat, which he conſtantly wore. * Our vices always take a tincture of our ſtate of life: a ſovereign's avarice is of a different caſt from that of the meaneſt of his ſubjects. 'Tis very probable that LEWIS the eleventh's motive for wearing ſuch dirty cloaths was to appear ſingular. He reſolved to diſtinguiſh himſelf from other kings, by ſeeming to diſdain the pomp of royal grandeur. It appears alſo from ſome other actions of his life, that he took pleaſure in running counter to all other monarchs. It cannot be denied at leaſt, that it was for the ſake of ſingularity, that he employ'd his tailor for his herald, his barber for his embaſſador, and his phyſician for his chancellor. The beggarly appearance, ſo unworthy of a ſovereign, which he and his court made at the famous interview he had with HENRY king of Caſtille, and which only expoſed him to the contempt of the Spaniards, was a viſible affectation: it was a criticiſm on the ſumptuous dreſs and all the luxury of the Caſtillians: but the ſordid parcimony, which he oppoſed to their extravagance, was not perhaps leſs worthy of blame. However that be, as ſoon as this prince, who all his life had appeared ſo ill dreſſed, retired from the ſight of his ſubjects to his caſtle of Pleſ-

* The author of a book intitled: *Britannia languens*, London, 1680. computes the treaſure and grandeur of this prince by a reckoning in the chamber of accounts at Paris, of three half-pence for liquor to greaſe his boots. Pag. 211.

Pleſſis-les-Tours, his common dreſs was crimſon ſatin, furred with ſable: nay he took pleaſure in beſtowing the ſame ſort of cloaths on the ſmall number of courtiers, who were near his perſon. Thus we commonly paſs from one extreme to the other: and thus he was equally ſingular in both caſes.

I did not expect, ſir, when I began this letter, that it would run to this length. 'Tis the effect of the antipathy I have ever had to ſingularity. Since it is not permitted in ſociety to pluck off the maſk, with which men cover their imperfections, at leaſt let us not ſuffer ourſelves to be impoſed on by the arts they uſe to hide them from us. Let us grant our eſteem to thoſe only who deſerve it; and believe that defects are always defects: if there are ſome, which now and then accompany good qualities, they do not always ſuppoſe them. We may find a man of merit who has the little defect of being willing to appear ſingular: but a much greater number is to be found, who have the ſame affectation without the leaſt merit.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

To the Abbé D'OLIVET,

Of the French Academy;

On the Engliſh tongue: with a compariſon inſtituted between it and the French.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

YOU deſire me to write my thoughts on a language, which other ſtudies have hindered you from applying yourſelf to. Accuſtomed to ſpread beauties and philoſophical light on matters purely grammatical, you do not think what difficulty another perſon finds in handling them; and you do not ſuſpect that the taſk you lay on me, is above my courage and ſtrength.

If the Engliſh had as good works on their language as we have on ours, I ſhould not be ſo much ſtartled at the undertaking: but they have not ſo much as a good dictionary; nay they have hardly a tolerable grammar. Mr. DRYDEN ſhould have made his nation ſenſible how much they wanted both theſe works, inſtead of ſpending ill-timed pleaſantary on the dictionary of the French academy, * without which

* Preface to his tranſlation of Virgil's Bucolics.

which we ſhould not perhaps have had others more copious, of which this is the baſe. Few of the Engliſh have applied themſelves to the ſtudies requiſite for eſtabliſhing the rules of a grammar, and thoſe who have attempted it are not very ſure guides.

I am far from placing among thoſe works of little reflection, a letter of doctor SWIFT, which contains a *Propoſal for correcting, improving and aſcertaining the Engliſh tongue.* This piece has been of great aſſiſtance to me, eſpecially in regard to the origin of this language, which I am going to handle, before I communicate ſome obſervations I have made on the qualities peculiar to it.

England firſt peopled by a nation, which ſpoke the ſame tongue with the Celts of Gaul, in after-times received new colonies from Gaul itſelf, who carried with them the names by which they were known in their native country: thus we find even pariſians (*Pariſii*) ſettled here. The Romans ſubdued but part of this iſland, and had but a ſmall number of ſettlements therein. However they introduced the uſe of the Latin tongue; but excepting the colonies and towns where their garriſons were, the Britons under their ſubjection ſpoke but a corrupted jargon made up of the two tongues.

The ſame thing happened in Gaul, where the vulgar tongue was compoſed of words chiefly borrowed from the Latin, but made and turned according to the genius of the ancient language of the natives. Of this we

have

have an example in the language of Britany in France, wherein moſt part of the words are French, and not of the ancient Britiſh of Wales or Cornwall. Thus the Spaniſh is compoſed of Latin, Gothic, Arabic, and a few Iberian or Baſque words, generally reduced to the Gothic grammar. The Italian in like manner is blended with the Latin of the Provinces, (for it was a jargon they ſpoke in the Provinces) the Gothic and the Lombardian.

When the Romans were obliged to recall their legions out of England, in order to defend them againſt the northern barbarians; the Britons now left to themſelves, being too weak to repulſe the Picts of Scotland their mortal enemies, called in the Saxons to their aſſiſtance. Theſe ſoon became maſters of the greateſt part of the iſland, and eſtabliſhed their power, cuſtoms and language all together. There are ſome pretty conſiderable works ſtill extant in their language. After the Saxons, the Danes having conquer'd England brought in their own, which is a dialect of the Teutonic, very different from the Saxon or Anglo-Saxon. Again the Normans, who were a pack of adventurers from all the nations of the North, after having eſtabliſhed themſelves in this iſland, introduced the uſe of the tongue or jargon they ſpoke. This jargon received the different dialects promiſcuouſly, without reducing them to any rule. Thus the Engliſh tongue has the ſame origin with the

German

German, and all the others ſpoken in the North. For this reaſon it is, that the Germans, Swedes, Danes and Dutch pronounce the Engliſh with eaſe: which the Italians, Spaniards and French cannot do. Even at this day moſt part of the words that expreſs the firſt ideas are the ſame in Engliſh and all the northern languages.

WILLIAM the conqueror, who put an end to the reign of the Saxons, thought it neceſſary, in order to ſtrengthen his power in England, to introduce the language as well as laws of his nation. He therefore brought in the uſe of the French tongue, which was ſpoken in the provinces ſituate on the north of the Loire. He diſperſed Normans in all the monaſteries, to teach it: he ordained that all pleadings and public acts ſhould be written in French: and if his project did not ſucceed, he was the occaſion at leaſt, that the Engliſh tongue began from that time to be filled with words taken from ours. We have WILLIAM's laws in the language he publiſhed them, and it is a French perhaps leſs remote from that we now ſpeak, than ſeveral works compoſed in France, even in a later age. Doctor HICKES in his *theſaurus linguarum ſeptentrionalium* has taken notice of a manuſcript pſalter written in the reign of king STEPHEN, in four columns, Latin, French, Daniſh and Norman, which furniſhes a proof of what I have here ſaid.

The French continued a long time the court language; it is ſtill that of the ancient lawyers. * The Engliſh tongue abandoned to the uſe of the people, was gradually formed by a mixture of all thoſe ſpoken by people of different origins.

The Domains which WILLIAM's ſucceſſors held in France, and the conqueſts they had made there, had eſtabliſhed ſuch a correſpondence between France and England; that the Engliſh of three or four hundred years ago, was more mixed with French, than it now is. And poſſibly the knowledge of the Engliſh of thoſe times may prove very uſeful to thoſe who would make themſelves acquainted with our old French. The peruſal of CHAUCER has made me read our old poets with greater eaſe. Many words are grown obſolete in our language, which enrich that of the Engliſh: and they have ſome of great energy, which are no longer found among us but in the jargon of ſome of our provinces: in fine they have preſerved others, of which we have not the leaſt traces remaining.

You, who are ſo great a maſter of our language, do you not find, ſir, that the middle of the reign of LEWIS XIV. ſeems to be the time when it was carried to its greateſt perfection? The Engliſh language on the contrary began to

* Even at this day the form of paſſing and giving the royal aſſent to bills is in French. For public bills, *le roi veut:* for private, *ſoit fait comme il eſt deſiré.* When the lower houſe paſſes a bill, the words are, *les communs ont aſſenté,* &c.

to degenerate before it roſe to that which it might have attain'd. It was under queen ELIZABETH, that it came neareſt to it. This language was then by the tranſlation of the bible, enriched with many oriental words and turns of expreſſion. Doctor SWIFT aſſures us, that, for the ſtyle, this tranſlation, as well as the book of common prayer done about the ſame time, have greater ſtrength and beauty than the beſt written works of the moderns. Sir WALTER RALEIGH, one of the miniſters of that great queen, who herſelf underſtood ſeveral languages; the celebrated SPENCER, and FAIRFAX, are ſtill reckoned among the beſt writers of their nation.

The Engliſh kept up its credit to the time of the rebellion againſt CHARLES I. Under CROMWELL the jargon of enthuſiaſts gained ſuch an aſcendant, that it entirely infected the manner of ſpeaking and writing: and if I may be allowed to give my opinion, poſſibly it feels ſomewhat of its effects to this day. Soon after, the licentiouſneſs of the reign of CHARLES II. corrupted at the ſame time the language and morals of the nation. In this vicious and polite court, wit and libertiniſm bore equal ſway. The writers of that time, copying after the court, were not exact, either as to morals or ſtyle. On one hand they ſhook off the yoke of decency, on the other they made a ſacrifice of judgment to wit, that is, to bad taſte: for affected or ill-timed

wit is really a fault. COWLEY ſparkles with wit *, the earl of ROCHESTER has no reſpect for modeſty. The wiſe WALLER is perhaps the only one, who preſerved himſelf from both theſe contagions.

The prince of Orange, and the elector of Hanover, who ſince that time came to the throne of Great-Britain, muſt have retarded the progreſs of a language, to which they were ſtrangers. 'Tis the court that gives out the faſhions in all countries: in that of thoſe princes German or French were more ſpoken than Engliſh.

In fine, it is thought, that ſince the reign of CHARLES I. the Engliſh tongue has acquired but ſome *affected phraſes and new conceited words*, which it ſtood in little or no need of; while it has loſt much of its ſtrength and native beauty. May I preſume to make one reflection here, which unhappily is but too well grounded? 'Tis not the fault of ſome writers of our age, that the ſame thing has not happened among us: for they ſeem to uſe their utmoſt endeavours to corrupt our language. They run after wit, like the authors of CHARLES II's reign. *They are*, as MONTAGNE ſays of thoſe of his time, *audacious and*

* This COWLEY, who, as DRYDEN ſays, *had a greater ſhare of wit than any man he ever knew*, has extremely ill followed the wiſe advice he gave to others. He ſays in his ode of wit:

Yet 'tis not to adorn and gild each part,
That ſhews more coſt and art.
Jewels at noſe and lips but ill appear;
Rather than *all things wit*, let *none* be there.

and diſdainful enough, not to follow the common road: but are loſt for want of invention and diſcretion. There is nothing to be ſeen in them but a wretched affectation of ſtrangeneſs: cold and abſurd diſguiſings, which inſtead of raiſing ſink the ſubject. If they can but gorge in novelty, they have no regard to efficacy. In order to ſeize a new word, they quit the common one, which is frequently ſtronger and more nervous.

With reſpect to the Engliſh, that ſpoken at preſent is ſtill very expreſſive, but yet I doubt it is not an abſolutely finiſhed language: if ever it comes to be poliſhed, it will undergo the ſame fate as ours: it will loſe its ſtrength in proportion as it acquires ſmoothneſs. The language which the Engliſh ſpeak at this day, is full of ſuch harſh ſounds, *that*, as one of their authors ſays, *none but a Northern ear can endure it.* MILTON has complained of the ſame defect in his time. He likewiſe ſays that as the Engliſh live in a cold climate, they cannot open their mouths ſufficiently to pronounce the Southern languages gracefully; and that generally ſpeaking, they articulate every ſound with the mouth a little cloſed. It ſhould ſeem as if the ſame ſun, which gives more fragancy to flowers and more taſte to fruits, gives likewiſe nicer organs and more delicate ſenſations to men. In Italy a peaſant has a juſt ear: poetry and muſic are familiar there to people of all ranks. An Arabian girl ſpeaks politely, and in verſe too, with her pitcher on her head.

In this reſpect, perhaps the temperature of the air has not leſs influence on brute animals than on men. Cold and heat may occaſion the ſame difference in the nightingale's notes, as is found in our manner of articulating ſounds. *It is obſerved*, ſays mr. ADDISON, *that ſeveral of the ſinging birds of our own country learn to ſweeten their voices, and mellow the harſhneſs of their natural notes, by practiſing under thoſe that come from warmer climates* *.

As the abundance of conſonants makes the French harſher than the Italian, the ſame reaſon renders the Engliſh much more ſo than the French. You, ſir, who are ſo perfect a maſter of the learned languages, are ſenſible of the advantage they have over thoſe now ſpoken in Europe. You likewiſe know, that all languages, ancient and modern, have always been indebted to the poets for their politeneſs, and more eſpecially for their ſmoothneſs. As the firſt verſes were made only to be ſung, they were obliged to avoid the meeting of ſyllables of difficult pronunciation, and to retrench from many words ſuch conſonants as were too rough. What they did at firſt purely to give more harmony to their verſe, was afterwards adopted by cuſtom, and contributed to embelliſh the whole language, in which they made thoſe changes.

This MALHERBE did among us. We had poets before him, but he is the firſt that ſtudied harmony. On the contrary, the Engliſh poets,

* Spect. vol. I. no. 29.

poets, and eſpecially thoſe of CHARLES II's reign, have taken the liberty to abbreviate words, in order to ſave time and pains, tho' their language was already overſtock'd with harſh ſounds. If they happen not to hit the meaſure of their verſe, an *e* is immediately retrenched, and thus three conſonants are left together, which 'tis almoſt impoſſible to bring into one ſyllable. Such are theſe words, *wiſh'd, walk'd, drudg'd. Their taſte,* ſays doctor SWIFT, *in time became ſo depraved, that what was at firſt a poetical licence, they made their choice, alledging that the words pronounced at length, ſounded faint and languid*; tho' in reality theſe ſounds, even to the ear of an Engliſh *Connoiſſeur*, are more unharmonious and barbarous than the others were languid and faint. This is what renders the declamation of the Engliſh ſtage ſo dragging: ſometimes the actor is compelled to it by the harſhneſs of the words, which he finds a difficulty to pronounce; at other times he lengthens thoſe whoſe pronunciation is more eaſy, and thinks thus the better to expreſs the paſſion. CIBBER, a player who has acquired great reputation on the London ſtage, and who has ſeen BARON act on ours, told me that he was extremely diſguſted at the ſwiftneſs, with which we ſpeak the verſes in tragical performances. On the contrary, a Frenchman is ſhock'd at the languid declamation of the Engliſh: which is the more ſurprizing, as ſtrangers always complain of the rapidity in pro-

nouncing a language they are little acquainted with. And that of the Engliſh ſtage muſt be very languid, if it ſeems ſo to us. And indeed we find it quite contrary to nature, which the Engliſh pretend to imitate as well as we. But in this reſpect it is not the ſame every where: thoſe ſounds which move us to compaſſion would perhaps make a Chineſe laugh. M. DE MOIVRE, who ſpeaks as freely and well of CORNEILLE and RACINE, as of LEIBNITZ and NEWTON, told me that the ſame CIBBER happening one day to be joaking on our tragical declamation, he made him ſenſible that that of the Engliſh was but a conſtant repetition of the doleful cry of their watchmen; and that he remember'd to have heard CIBBER himſelf ſpeak the beſt verſe in ADDISON'S CATO in the tone of: *paſt twelve o'clock, a cloudy morning.*

Able grammarians have remarked, that the Hebrew, and all other languages that have not been refined, retain too great a number of monoſyllables. The Engliſh has this defect in common with all the tongues derived from the Saxon. As to the inclination of the Engliſh to ſhorten words, mr. ADDISON gives a reaſon for it, which has perhaps more of ſhew than of truth in it. He pretends that this proceeds from the averſion his countrymen have to talking too much. But yet the Engliſh authors, except thoſe who treat of the demonſtrative ſciences, do not appear to me to have this fear of ſaying too much before their eyes.

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The Lacedemonians, on whom this praiſe is beſtowed, did not diſtinguiſh themſelves by the brevity of words but of diſcourſes. Notwithſtanding the reſpect I bear to this illuſtrious writer, I think that what he has ſaid on this ſubject ſhews the high opinion he has of the Engliſh, more than a ſerious examination of the defects of their language. According to him they are all owing to what conſtitutes the Engliſh character, *viz.* modeſty, reflection and ſincerity. A leſs prejudiced critic, tho' perhaps ſomewhat too ſevere, reproaches his countrymen with the bad habit of ſhortening words as a tendency to relapſe into the barbarity of their northern anceſtors. The moſt judicious of the Engliſh grant that their language has theſe defects only for want of being poliſhed, as the Italian, Spaniſh and French. At leaſt if it be true that monoſyllables, ſo frequent in the Engliſh, are a proof of their love of taciturnity and reflection; thoſe that are in the German, Swediſh, and other Northern languages, prove the ſame thing in favour of the people who ſpeak them: and yet I doubt if the Engliſh would willingly allow ſo many nations to ſhare in an *Encomium*, which they believe to be due to them alone.

As they are accuſtomed to borrow expreſſions from all languages, their own is very copious. From our word *humeur*, the Engliſh have made *humour*: but they have given it a quite different ſignification from what it has in

French. The word *humeur* taken abſolutely in our tongue, conveys an idea of ſadneſs and diſcontent: *avoir de l'humeur*, is to be diſſatisfied. That of *humour* on the contrary, expreſſes the idea of ſingular and perhaps ſomewhat fooliſh joy. *Humour*, ſays one of their authors, *is the ridiculous extravagance of converſation, by which one man differs from all others.* 'Tis ſome odd habit, paſſion or affection, peculiar to one perſon. But this is not the only ſenſe, which this very familiar word bears in their language: it is as much made uſe of to expreſs a witty work, as the character of a perſon; and in both caſes always ſignifies a certain turn of pleaſantry, which is not too near the natural ſtrain, and yet is not entirely oppoſite to it. A man who has *humour*, is one that is at the ſame time pleaſant and ſingular: ſuch was monſieur DU FRESNI, whom you have known. His whim of ordering a ſoup of whey and freſh eggs to be ſerved at an entertainment he gave, and which coſt him dear, would have paſſed with the Engliſh for a piece of *humour*. They ſay, a work is full of it, when an uncommon pleaſantry runs through the whole. Such is RABELAIS's works, and thoſe of dean SWIFT, who tho' but his ſcholar, may be called the Engliſh RABELAIS. The comic of MOLIERE is too natural for the Engliſh to find what they call *humour* in it. His pieces in this reſpect are in the ſame caſe with thoſe of the ancients, whom DRYDEN reproaches

for

for not having known this ſort of pleaſantry: this author would have been better pleaſed with the comedies of DU FRESNI, becauſe they are more in the ſtyle of the Engliſh ſtage. His dialogue is exact without being natural. His wit is ſtudied without being affected. He ſays good things, but not as another would ſay them. All his pleaſantry has an original turn. *Dom Japhet d'Armenie*, *la Fille Capitaine*, and ſome others of our old pieces, have likewiſe a good deal of this ſort of pleaſantry, which is ſo much in the taſte of our neighbours.

Thus tho' the Engliſh regard *humour* as a gift beſtowed on their nation only, and unknown to all others; if we have not the expreſſion, we have the thing it ſignifies: and if it is not ſo common among us, if there is leſs *humour* in our writings and characters, this might happen becauſe we do not eſteem it as much as they. It is becauſe taſte is more common in France, that our authors write more naturally: and it is becauſe our countrymen have a greater regard to decency, that they live in a more uniform manner. And what do we loſe thereby, but ſome whimſical writers in literature, and ſome buffoons in ſociety?

The Engliſh on their ſide want a word, of which I wiſh they were leſs acquainted with the idea. Would you believe it, ſir? 'Tis a word to expreſs the French *ennui*. They have but periphraſes and feeble ſubſtitutes for it.

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They better expreſs the *tædium vitæ*, *l'ennui de la vie*, by the deſperate reſolutions they take, when tired of life, than by any term in their language. A perſon who neither knew their character, nor way of living, and had no other knowledge of their tongue but from books, not finding a word that expreſſes *ennui*, would imagine that England is the only country where this diſtemper of the mind is not known; juſt as one is tempted to believe that a nation is not acquainted with theft, if the language does not furniſh a term to expreſs the idea thereof. But certainly whoever would be of this opinion, would be hugely miſtaken. How comes it to paſs that the Engliſh, who have borrowed ſo many words from our language without neceſſity, have not received this, which ſo well expreſſes a thing they feel every moment, and which has not leſs influence on their temperament than on their character? The *ſpleen* or vapours, and even the conſumption, are perhaps nothing elſe but the *ennui* carried to its higheſt pitch, and become a dangerous, and ſometimes a mortal diſeaſe.

What I have ſaid of the Engliſh wanting an exact term to expreſs a ſentiment ſo common among them, is the more remarkable, becauſe they have very ſtrong words, and in great plenty, for all the other affections of the ſoul. The language of a people is a ſort of mirror that ſhews them. That of the Engliſh, whoſe paſſions are violent, is equally copious and pathetic, to characterize the different mo-

tions

tions of the heart. There is not a language perhaps, that expreſſes the ſentiments of love with greater vivacity, thoſe of Friendſhip with more warmth, the dejection from grief with more bitterneſs, and the outragiouſneſs of deſpair with more ſtrength: but the Engliſh tongue, rich as it is in painting the affections of the heart and actions of the body, is very poor in terms that relate to the productions of the mind, and the knowledge of the Belles-lettres, liberal arts, and all the objects of taſte and amuſement. The Engliſh cannot treat of theſe ſubjects without borrowing from their neighbours not only ſingle words, but ſometimes whole phraſes. When they would expreſs a lover of painting, muſic, &c. they uſe the term *virtuoſo*, taken from the Italians: but as loving and knowing them are two very different things, and which either here or elſewhere do not always go together, they are obliged to employ the French word *connoiſſeur* to characterize a judge in them. The ſame may be ſaid of the word *curieux* and ſeveral others. Some of their authors, who have writ on theſe ſubjects, have made uſe of ſo many French phraſes, that, for fear of being ſuſpected of affectation, they have declared that neceſſity compelled them to it. The reaſon why their tongue is not as rich as others in this reſpect, ſeems to me to be that given by one of their moſt judicious critics, the earl of SHAFTESBURY. *To whatever politeneſs*, ſays he, *we may ſuppoſe ourſelves already arrived*,

*rived, we muſt confeſs, that we were the lateſt barbarous, and the laſt civilized or poliſh'd people of Europe.**

I will enter into no particulars relating to grammar: that ſubject would carry me too far, nor did I engage to handle it. I will only remark, that what moſt diſtinguiſhes the Engliſh from the French and other tongues formed from the Latin, as the Italian and Spaniſh; is, that in the Engliſh, as well as in the German, the adjectives have neither number nor gender, and the ſubſtances are all of the ſame gender, except thoſe which expreſs man and woman, and the male and female of the moſt common animals. 'Tis the ſame in the Breton and Iriſh tongues; the articles and pronouns have genders, but the adjectives none.

The advantages, which the Engliſh poſſibly has over our tongue, are energy, copiouſneſs, and great freedom: thoſe peculiar to the French are clearneſs, order, and politeneſs. Direct conſtruction, that it is to ſay, order is the ſource of the clearneſs of the French: it is indeed expoſed thereby to fall into ſameneſs of ſounds, rhymes and verſes; but the ambiguity which tranſpoſitions throw on diſcourſe, is perhaps a greater defect.

Thoſe who pretend that tranſpoſitions do honour to the Latin, will give the Engliſh tongue the preference over the French. But the beſt critics of antiquity agree, that it is a perfec-

* Charact. Vol. 3. p. 151.

perfection in a ſpeech to place the words in the natural order. BOUHOURS ſays, that the emperor CHARLES V. who could ſpeak and write our language equally well, held it in high eſteem, and thought it fit for great affairs: and according to cardinal DU PERRON, he was wont to call it the language of ſtate. The event has juſtified his conjectures: it is become the language of politics, and of all the negotiations of Europe.

DRYDEN, who ſaid that the French are ſo good critics only becauſe they are bad poets; and that they buſy themſelves ſo much about the rules of grammar, only becauſe they want that genius which diſdains trifles: this ſame DRYDEN, I ſay, gives us in another place a very ſingular idea of the incertainty and diſorder, out of which neither he nor ſo many other celebrated writers have been able to extricate the Engliſh tongue. *I am often put to a ſtand*, ſays he, *in conſidering whether what I write be the idiom of the tongue, or falſe grammar, and nonſenſe couch'd beneath that ſpecious name of* ANGLICISM: *and have no other way to clear my doubts, but by tranſlating my Engliſh into Latin, and thereby trying what ſenſe the words will bear in a more ſtable language. I am deſirous, if it were poſſible, that we might all write with the ſame certainty of words, and purity of phraſe, to which the Italians firſt arrived, and after them the French.**

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* Dryden's epiſtle dedicatory to Troilus and Creſſida.

As to politeneſs in language, many look on it as ſomewhat chimerical. They ſuppoſe that the lofty and low ſtyles always depend on the ſubjects, and on the perſon who handles them: but perhaps they are miſtaken. The politeneſs of a language conſiſts in ways of ſpeaking different from thoſe of the common people, but yet without affectation. A language will be more or leſs polite, in proportion as it affords a greater or leſſer number of expreſſions, which are neither affected nor vulgar. Father COLLADO ſays, that the Japaneſe, who all ſpeak the ſame tongue, have nevertheleſs two languages really different: one reſerved for noble uſes, the other for common and familiar diſcourſe. * In their tongue every thing has two names, one of eſteem, another of contempt. This politeneſs in the language partakes of the manners of the nation. In France, we avoid nothing more than ſpeaking like the common people: on the contrary, in England they affect it; becauſe there is an intereſt in pleaſing them, which cannot take place among us. The nature of a government has an influence on all things. In Spain, where the common ſort believe they compoſe a part of the nobility, they imitate their grandees in language and gravity.

By the works you have publiſhed in French, you have proved, ſir, that nobody is better ac-

* Japaneſe grammar and dictionary printed at Rome.

acquainted with the beauties of Greek and Latin, from which the polite languages ſpoken at preſent in Europe are derived. The French has been reproached with variations: I have ſpoke of thoſe which the Engliſh has undergone; and you know that the Latin has changed more than ours in the ſame ſpace of time. In fine, m. CHARPENTIER, an ancient member of your academy, in his book on the excellence of the French tongue, ſays, that by applying to it the maxims, which the philoſophers and rhetoricians have given us to know in what conſiſts the beauty of elocution in general, it appears that the French is one of thoſe that come neareſt to the idea of a perfect language. In this point I ſhall abide by your deciſion, fully ſatisfied that there is not a better judge in France. In order to compare different languages together, it is not ſufficient to know the rules of each, 'tis likewiſe requiſite to be ſenſible of their beauties. It is not ſufficient to know the words, one muſt be endowed with that philoſophical turn of mind, that connects all the ſciences, and without which there is no excelling in any. 'Tis for want of this turn of mind that we have as few good grammarians, as perſons capable of diſtinguiſhing all the merit of ſuch as are.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

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LETTER XIII.

To Monſieur DE BUFFONS;

On the magnificence affected by the Engliſh in their funerals.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

THE pleaſure I find in converſing with my friends makes me neglect nothing that may contribute to my obſervations; and chance frequently rewards me for the ſmall care I take: for I cannot walk many ſteps without finding matter for reflection. We ought not to deſpiſe any detail that may lead us to the knowledge of a people. If now I purpoſe to give you an account of ſome religious ceremonies of our neighbours, I entirely lay aſide the relation they may have to divine worſhip; and confine myſelf to examine them as they tend to characteriſe their morals. As much as we ought to reſpect what religion has made ſacred, ſo much we are permitted to laugh at whatever the folly and vanity of men have blended with the moſt holy practices.

Is it not aſtoniſhing, that in ſo ſenſible a nation as this ſo little formalities are uſed in the celebration of marriage, the moſt important act of life; and that ſo much is obſerved

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in burials, a ceremony which ought to be of the leaſt importance both to the living and the dead. Burials in England are real funeral pomps: were it not for the black colour affected in them, they would ſometimes be very curious ſights. The Engliſh, after the example of the Chineſe and ancient Romans, make it a point of honour to render their funerals as magnificent as they can: you commonly ſee coaches and ſix not only at thoſe of the nobility, but alſo at thoſe of the common people. The loweſt tradeſman muſt have two or three at his burial, and other conditions of life in proportion. And now and then the mourners have entertainments prepared for them, which make part of the ceremony (as was the cuſtom in Rome) and baniſh all grief. They are alſo preſented with mourning rings adorned with inſcriptions, herſes, ſkeletons, &c. and ſo artfully wrought and enamelled, that in foreign countries, whither they are exported, they are often worn as very elegant rings.

Nothing is more common in London and all over England than neat well-ſtocked ſhops and warehouſes of undertakers. Several dealers make eſtates by this trade. Like the ancient *Libitinarii* of Rome, they ſell and furniſh every thing neceſſary for the funeral ceremony. 'Tis very amuſing to ſee the genteelneſs and variety of their ſigns. They have coffins of all ſorts and all colours, to ſuit the taſte and vanity of thoſe who chooſe to be buried: they expoſe them in their ſhops, as if

their deſign was to tempt ſuch paſſengers as may happen to be tired of life.

A certain perſon, who made the public good his ſtudy, did a ſignal piece of ſervice to his countrymen in this way. As the ſculptors of London have no invention, he ordered great variety of deſigns of ſepulchral monuments to be made by the beſt maſters in Italy and France, and particularly by the famous mr. BOUCHER; where every body may chooſe one according to his circumſtances and taſte, and have the pleaſure of ſeeing it executed in his life time: which may be a proper employment for the paſſion old men have for building.

There is a ſort of ſatisfaction in dying in England, which is little known out of it. He who has lived in the moſt abject ſtate, is ſure of making a ſhining figure at his burial. This makes a pleaſing point of view for the ſelf-love of the living. He knows little of mankind, who cannot conceive that ſuch ſilly idea's have an effect on them. Some there are who ſpend their lives in contriving what may make them be talked of on the day of their death. There are curious perſons, who collect pictures with the ſole view of making a noiſe at the ſale of them for the benefit of their heirs. At that of Mr. DELA FAYE, who had a good collection, I have heard one of theſe *Virtuoſi* ſay: *my collection will make a much finer figure.*

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The care the Engliſh take of all the particulars of their burial, would make one believe they find more pleaſure in dying than living. He who has lived the moſt obſcurely in the world, ſeems to affect to go out of it in a blaze. His funeral muſt have the air of a triumph. People here are as fond of pomp in their funeral cavalcades, as they are ſtudious to avoid luxury in dreſs. The great expences they are at, are always burthenſome to the heirs. Among the common ſort, their ſumptuous burials eat up the whole inheritance. In France, all is beſtowed on ornament; a ſon ruins his father by his extravagance in cloaths and equipages: here on the contrary, fathers frequently ruin their children at their death, by the expence of their funerals. A perſon who has walked all his life on foot, muſt be carried to his grave in a coach and ſix.

What a ſtrange ſort of ambition is this! But ſuch is the vanity of men, that the loweſt of them cannot conſent to be thought an indifferent entity to the community: at the fatal inſtant that ſnatches him away, his thoughts are actually employ'd how to make his ſurvivors take notice of him. Self-love is inherent to all ages and conditions: as it is born with man, it does not die before him. All our actions, upon a cloſe inſpection, are but a web of inſignificancies and follies: our whole life is ſo odd a comedy, that the very unravelling of its plot often makes the ſpecta-

tors laugh. Our manner of quitting the world is generally as ridiculous as our manner of living in it.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XIV.

To the Marquis DE G***;

Containing obſervations on the political conſtitution of England: *with a diſquiſition on the beſt form of government.*

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD,

WHAT does your lordſhip think of the conſtitution of the Engliſh government, who have ſo narrowly examined it, and are gifted with that ſuperior reaſon, which forms a ſound judgment, not only of men and their paſſions, but alſo of their true intereſts, and of the ſureſt means for attaining them.

The Engliſh pretend that their government, which they derive from the old Saxons, ſupports liberty better than any republic: and that, without being expoſed to the danger of arbitrary power, it has all the advantages

eſſential

eſſential to monarchy. This indeed is a plan becoming their wiſdom. A mixt government compoſed of the monarchical, ariſtocratical and democratical, in ſuch a manner that each part of the legiſlature is a counterballance to the others, ſeems to be the beſt of all kinds. But one of the greateſt politicians of antiquity, TACITUS, ſays that ſuch a governour can ſubſiſt only in idea; and that it is either impoſſible to eſtabliſh it; or if that be compaſſed, it cannot long ſubſiſt *. May not this poſſibly be the fate with which that of England is threatened, by the continual diſturbances it meets with. The parliament has not always had the ſame authority. Without looking farther back, HENRY VIII. did not reign over this nation much leſs deſpotically than FRANCIS I. over ours. He excluded the iſſue of JAMES IV. of Scotland from the throne: and the parliament confirmed his will. *In his reign*, ſays an Engliſh author, *the voice of the law was but the echo of the voice of the king*. And any one may imagine how far he ſtretched his power, from his daring to meddle with religion.

The political conſtitution of England appears indeed to have all the perfections of a republic without any of its defects: ſir WILLIAM TEMPLE ſays, it remedies the vice of the Roman republic, the moſt famous of all.

* Cunctas nationes et urbes populus aut priores aut ſinguli regunt. Delecta ex his & conſtituta reipublicæ forma laudari facilius quam evenire, vel ſi evenit, haud diuturna eſſe poteſt.

Here we do not ſee the commons in perpetual wars with the lords; but does not a jealouſy ſubſiſt between the king and his people? And is it not as dangerous as the other? BAYLE has made this remark: *to ſet bounds to regal authority, is the means of inſpiring the prince with a deſire of attaining arbitrary power.*

Great men may have different intereſts, difficult to be reconciled: on the contrary a king has always the ſame, and tends more conſtantly to his ends than a body compoſed of many members, who ſeldom act in concert. The poiſe cannot long ſubſiſt: the king's power will be daily increaſing; the free conceſſions of the parliament add every day new degrees to the ſovereign's authority; and the ballance begins already to incline to his ſide. Suppoſe that ſome time or other different enterprizing princes ſhould take it into their heads to abuſe their power; I foreſee under each of them a war kindled between the king and his people. And what muſt be the event at laſt? That one of the parties will cruſh the other, and that the mixt government will ſooner or later be ſucceeded either by a true republic, or an abſolute monarchy: ſuch as the moſt part of the others in Europe. Under CROMWELL, regal authority had been aboliſhed, if he had not ſecretly aſpired to it. CHARLES II. on his reſtoration, might have rendered it independent, if he knew how to make a proper advantage of the circumſtances of the times. Through a ſcandalous abuſe of

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the liberty which reigns in England, a certain writer of this nation has calculated how long the chriſtian religion will ſubſiſt here. I am of opinion, that a computation of the period of their government would have been eaſier and ſhorter.

Of what avail are laws, which it is almoſt impoſſible to put in practice? And how ſhould they be obſerved by thoſe whoſe intereſt it is to violate them, and who may infringe them with impunity! The acts which were intended to ſecure the freedom of elections, and the independency of parliaments, the two moſt eſſential articles of Engliſh liberties, have but introduced new abuſes, inſtead of ſuppreſſing old ones. Men ſeek their private advantage in all things: and the maſter-piece of policy is, to make them find it in the execution of the law. May it not be ſaid that there is a perpetual miſunderſtanding here between the king and people: that the fire is ſometimes covered under the aſhes; but as it is never entirely quenched, a general combuſtion is always to be feared.

Tho' the king of England can do no wrong, yet as all grants depend on him, his power muſt diminiſh that of the parliament. The Roman commonwealth was ſcarce formed, when the people perceived that they were to be ſubjugated by the great men, if they remained maſters of all grants. They took care to have juſtice done them, and no longer ſuffered the ſenators to have the ſole right of

diſpoſing of all ſtate employments. They even compelled them in courſe of time to allow their tribunes the ſame honours with the conſuls.

In England the king, lords and commons equally ſhare the legiſlative power: but the court, on which all places and dignities depend, thereby keeps the lords in awe; and has other means of gaining over the repreſentatives of the people. The avarice of ſome may be tempted, and the ſelf-love of others ſeduced. He who guards againſt the ſnare of riches, ſuffers himſelf to be dazzled by the ſplendor of honours. It is perhaps more difficult to reſiſt ſeduction than open tyranny. Force is oppoſed to force: to the allurements of riches and grandeur, what can be oppoſed but the buckler of virtue? But how many men are too weak to uſe it! While thoſe who hold places, penſions, and honours from the king, are allowed to ſit in the houſe of commons, moſt probably it will be always deendent on the court. Theſe ways open to a miniſter to ſecure a plurality of votes, are indirect means toprevent their freedom.

How came the Romans to carry patriotiſm to ſo great a heighth? 'Tis becauſe that virtue could raiſe them to the firſt employments of the commonwealth: thereby a plebian became a tribune, and a ſenator obtained the conſulſhip. But you will agree with me, ſir, that zeal for the public good is not here the ſhorteſt way to dignities. When a ſeat is to

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be filled in the houſe of commons, he who ſpends moſt money at the election, will frequently be preferred before him, who is better able to ſerve his country.

If it be an inconvenience in the Engliſh government, that the power of making war, and that of raiſing money which is the ſinews of it, are not in the ſame hand; it is compenſated by the benefit reſulting to the people, that it thereby becomes more difficult to engage in burthenſome wars.

An iſland ſeems made for commerce, and the inhabitants ſhould rather think of defending themſelves, than making conqueſts on the continent. They would find too great difficulty in keeping them, on account of the diſtance, and the hazards of the ſea. A trading nation ſhould never make war, but in order to protect its trade. In ſeveral reſpects, the nature of the Engliſh government entirely agrees both with the ſituation of the country and the temper of the inhabitants. It is nevertheleſs to be remarked, that as the king and people here ſeem to have ſeparate intereſts; as much as war is fatal to the nation by deſtroying commerce, ſo much it is advantageous to the ſovereign by encreaſing his power. He then obtains all he aſks, the moſt oppoſite parties unite to ſupport the common cauſe. It is no wonder that the kings of England become parties concerned in all the wars of Europe: in ſo doing they only follow their perſonal intereſt. They are never ſo powerful at

home,

home, as when they employ the natural inquietude of their ſubjects abroad. In general, both the advantages and inconveniencies of the Engliſh government are ſo conſiderable, that it is difficult to determine to which ſide the ballance leans. The people are really richer here than any where elſe; and they partly at leaſt owe this advantage to the wiſdom of their laws. But amidſt all this abundance, the nation is ſo diſunited and rent by continual factions, that it ſeems every moment to be threatened with the horrors of civil wars. Thoſe factions, libels, and miſtruſts inſtilled into the people, are buds of anarchy, whoſe evil fruit ſoon or late grows to maturity.

It is a problem propoſed by all politicians, to determine which of the two governments is preferable, that of a ſingle perſon, or that of ſeveral: and probably it will remain a long time undecided. The judges on each ſide are too much prejudiced to make us abide by their opinions. But I ſhould think, that the moſt perfect government is that, the adminiſtration of which is the moſt eaſy; and wherein order once eſtabliſhed is the moſt exactly kept up: that wherein the ſubordination, that ought to ſubſiſt between thoſe who are choſen to rule, and thoſe who are made to obey, is beſt obſerved; and where the laws are moſt reſpected, which ſecure the tranquillity of the ſtate. This, in my opinion, is what is found oftener in ſtates which have but one chief, than in thoſe that have many. But perhaps in reality

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the beſt government is neither monarchy, nor republic; but that, whether monarchy or republic, whoſe chiefs have the moſt probity and virtue.

It is cuſtomary to compare the body politic to the human body. In purſuance of this idea, if we look on an uneven conſtitution of body as a bad one, we may ſuſpect a radical vice in the conſtitution of a ſtate, which is ſubject to frequent alterations. A man tortured by a continual fever with exacerbations, to me appears the image of the Engliſh government, conſtantly diſturbed by parties, and frequently altered by revolutions. Even at preſent it ſeems to be in a ſort of criſis. If it be true, that this government is one of the moſt perfect ever invented; does not this truth redound to the ſhame of human wiſdom! It is doubted whether this wiſdom has had better ſucceſs than that chance, which eſtabliſhed pure and ſimple monarchies in other places.

I have the honour to be,

My lord,

Your lordſhip's moſt humble, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

To Monſieur H***;

On the extravagancy of the Engliſh taſte for things merely odd and extraordinary.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

IF any thing could perſuade me that the ſingularity, the Engliſh boaſt of, is natural to them, it would be, that in matters of taſte it is what affects from the moſt. In ſciences as well as in arts, the greateſt part of their productions are impreſſed with this ſeal. They have ſeveral works, which they eſteem, and which have no other merit.

In all countries the greateſt number of mankind take delight in the repreſentation of extraordinary things. They ſeem to know no agreeable ſenſations, but ſuch as are ſtrong; their organs are not delicate enough to be affected with graceful objects; and in order to pleaſe them, they muſt be aſtoniſhed. How many are there, who prefer the tricks of a tumbler that ventures his life on a rope, to the noble and graceful dancing of DUPRE'; and who do not ſuſpect that their pleaſure ariſes only from the notion of the danger he incurs.

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If the common people are every where ſtruck with the ſingular; none are more in love with it than the Engliſh. Thoſe two ridiculous gigantic figures, which ſtand in the Guild-hall of London, and ſeem to have been put up there purely to fright children; and that indecent repreſentation of one of their kings, which is to be ſeen in the Tower of London, are a kind of public advertiſements of the nation's genius. In England rarity ſupplies the place of beauty: and any man is ſure of ſucceſs, if he lets the public know that he is extraordinary. The Grand THOMAS *, to make his fortune, ſhould quit the Pont-neuf, and ſet up at Charing-croſs. Several of his trade have enriched themſelves in London, whoſe hats and feathers were not near ſo large, nor their inventions ſo fruitful in attracting the eyes of the mob.

In France we do not take notice even of thoſe, who diſtinguiſh themſelves by ſome laudable ſingularities. There died laſt year at Paris a ſhoemaker, who had collected ſo well-choſen a library, that after his death it ſold by auction for near two thouſand crowns: yet this circumſtance did not make his name better known. If the like thing had happened in London, the news-papers and journals of all kinds would have recorded it; and the ſtudents of the two univerſities would have compoſed encomiaſtic verſes to his memory.

Such

* A tooth-drawer at Paris, who leaves our ROCK far behind him in the race of quackery.

Such is the Engliſh taſte for things merely extraordinary, that they had rather ſee the picture of an old man, who had lived upwards of a hundred years uſeleſs and obſcure, than one of the duke of MARLBOROUGH, who has done ſuch ſignal ſervices to the nation. A wealthy Engliſhman will have an alehouſe woman painted and engraved at his own expence, who has rendered herſelf illuſtrious by her impudence and dexterity in boxing: and the print of a game-keeper, whoſe ſole merit lies in his carbuncled face, will be a match for that of FARINELLI. In fine many people would rather poſſeſs the drawing and dimenſions of an old tree * three quarters rotten, but thro' which a coach and ſix can drive; than the moſt agreeable landſkips of PAUL BRILL, or CLAUD LORRAIN.

In general, the Engliſh are leſs ſtruck with the beautiful and true, than with the extraordinary and fantaſtic. Their writers, like their artiſts, ſtudy more to imagine ſomething whimſical, than any thing graceful. And to come to the moral; excepting the eſſential virtues, which are the ſame in all nations, it appears to me that in civil life people here value themſelves more upon being ſingular than rational.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER

* This tree ſtands in a park of the duke of Norfolk in Nottinghamſhire.

LETTER XVI.

To Monſieur DE BUFFONS;

Containing remarks on the condition of ſervants in general; the mercenarineſs and other defects of the Engliſh ſervants; the expence of dining at great houſes; and the cuſtom of the Engliſh, eſpecially in the country, of not letting their viſitors depart till they and their ſervants are equally drunk.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

IT is no wonder that there are ſo many French ſervants in England. At London our language, cuſtoms and manners are much in vogue. Theſe ſervants contribute at leaſt towards keeping thoſe they ſerve in the conſtant exerciſe of them: and the Engliſh pay them in proportion to their utility.

I know nothing contemptible but vice. We ought to take more or leſs notice of men according to their rank in the world: but there is no degree of them, that ſhould be ſo little eſteemed, as to ſcorn to know it. The difference exiſting between the various conditions of life, is not always perceptible between thoſe who are placed in them. A grandee

may

may have a mean, and a ſlave an elevated ſoul. In the moſt abject ſtate we ſometimes find certain ſtrokes, which do the greateſt honour to human nature. Rome has had ſlaves, whom ſhe was compelled to rank among her heroes.

You are too much a philoſopher, for me to fear entering with you into ſome detail on this ſort of men, who have the misfortune to be obliged, in ſome meaſure, to ſell themſelves to others, and are commonly called domeſtics. Their manners may contribute towards knowing a nation: the general way of thinking influences all conditions. One may ſafely ſay, that domeſtics have all the defects of the lower people by education, and all thoſe of their maſters by example.

Domeſtics are a ſort of men, who, by a neceſſary conſequence of well regulated ſocieties, are deſtined to live in dependence on thoſe, of whom they ſtand in need. The Engliſh, to whom all dependence is inſupportable, are very unfit to fulfill the duties of this ſubordinate ſtate. They are as bad ſervants, as they are good maſters. Poſſibly the contrary may be ſaid of us: and unhappily this would not redound to our praiſe.

The only virtue pretty commonly found in Engliſh ſervants, is one of thoſe peculiar to this nation, I mean cleanlineſs. As to the reſt, they have an aukward air, and uncouth behaviour in every thing they do. Beſides, they have a certain pride, which it would be happier

pier not to know in their ſtate: as it muſt neceſſarily encreaſe the weight of their yoke. It is a fault they are charged with; and yet it may poſſibly be but the natural reſult of the haughty character of the nation. But what we call haughtineſs perhaps appears to them to be only a nobleneſs or elevation of ſoul.

The Engliſh are the people, who leaſt ſubmit to the inconveniences of all ſocieties. On this head they fall into a kind of contradiction. They love order, and yet cannot bear police, which is its ſupport. They are ſenſible how neceſſary it is, that the laws ſhould be revered, and yet make no efforts towards curbing licentiouſneſs. They will have a king, on condition almoſt of not obeying him. In a word, commands aſtoniſh them, even in the loweſt of all conditions. Is this a vice or a virtue? Is it the effect of their love of liberty, or that of a haughtineſs which cannot brook with bending?

The Engliſh ſervants have another defect, which is ſo general that it conſtitutes a part of their character, and that is to be extremely mercenary. They are equally faulty by their love of money and their vanity. The firſt of thoſe vices renders them as mean, as the other ſometimes makes them impertinent.

I muſt not, ſir, leave you unacquainted with a cuſtom, which I believe to be peculiar to England. Wherever a perſon goes to dine, whether in town or in the country, he muſt give money to every one of the ſervants; and

that more or leſs according to his own rank and the rank of the perſon he dines with. They have laid people of all conditions under contribution; and we may bring ourſelves to bear it, if we knew the ſeveral rates. We eaſily perceive that it is not juſt to treat the butler of a peer of the realm like that of a ſheriff of a ſmall corporation; but how to ſettle the diſtinction to be made between thoſe of a duke, an earl, and a baron? Theſe are things that probably are not to be learnt without being very converſant in the world. GEMELLI CARRERI remarks in his account of China, that there is a cuſtom religiouſly obſerved in that country at the end of a repaſt, *which no other nation will approve*; that is, that each gueſt leave nine or ten pieces of eight, more or leſs according to his quality, in the hands of a domeſtic; and thus whereever a perſon goes, he pays for the wine he drinks. They have no ſuſpicion, that our neighbours do the ſame thing. It is ſingular to find ſuch foreign cuſtoms ſo near us. If thoſe, who travel the world over, knew Europe better, they would be the leſs ſurprized at what they obſerve out of it. We have foreſts peopled with Arabs, all but the beard: nay we have even our *Iroquois's* and *Topinambou's*.

However that be, in England at your leaving the houſe where you have dined, you find all the ſervants drawn up in the paſſage like a file of muſketteers, from the houſeſteward down to the loweſt livery ſervant, and each

each of them holds out his hand to you in as deliberate a manner, as the ſervants in our inns do on the like occaſion. And this is the only action, in which the Engliſh ſervants ſeem to have a polite air. While you are diſtributing your bounty, the maſter of the houſe, who waits on you to the door, turns his head aſide at each time, as if he bluſhed to ſee you pay for your meal. And probably the Chineſe have the ſame modeſty in this reſpect.

I cannot ſay, whether this cuſtom is more expreſſive of the generoſity of the maſters, or of the ſordid mercenary ſouls of the ſervants. It proves at leaſt, that the Engliſh do not live ſo much with one another, as we do among ourſelves. The day they viſit ſeems a feſtival to their domeſtics: they lay out the ſideboard with all the plate and rich things of the houſe: and it is for the extraordinary pains they take, that they have laid on this ſort of tax we ſpeak of.

There is not a man of ſenſe here, who does not perceive the inconveniencies of this cuſtom: but it is an old one, and as ſuch univerſally obſerved. Several perſons of the firſt rank have in vain attempted to aboliſh it: they have all miſcarried. This people who pique themſelves ſo much of being philoſophers, are nevertheleſs the moſt tenacious of ancient cuſtoms. They think very differently from what they did in former times, but they ſtill live in the ſame manner.

Moreover thoſe who have a number of ſervants, and who conſequently ſet the faſhion, have too much intereſt in preſerving this cuſtom: it often ſupplies the place of their ſervants wages. But it is not more favourable to them than burthenſome to people of moderate fortunes, who have the madneſs to keep company with great men. They are ſometimes obliged to purchaſe that honour dearer than it deſerves. One day that the duke of R * * reproached the celebrated M. de M * * for not coming to take a dinner with him; he anſwered: *my lord, your grace muſt have the goodneſs to excuſe me; I am not rich enough to have that honour often.*

If the Engliſh domeſtics are mercenary, it muſt alſo be allowed that they have gratitude. In order to give you a proof of it in town, as you are leaving their maſter's houſe, they call your people aloud, and pronounce your name with an emphaſis. Their tone more or leſs raiſed, expreſſes the degree of your generoſity and of their acknowledgment. Nay ſometimes, in hopes of being paid for it, they beſtow titles on a perſon, which he has no right to. And 'tis they probably, that introduced the cuſtom in England of dubbing a captain with the title of colonel, and an apothecary with that of doctor. There are people, as ridiculous as the *Bourgeois gentilhomme*, who are ſilly enough to be flattered with titles they have no claim to, and to buy that of *my lord* very dear.

In the country the ſervants of the gentleman where you have dined, have acquired a previous right to your liberality. They have made all your ſervants drunk: and it is in this point that they execute their maſter's orders with the moſt ſcrupulous punctuality: for thoſe orders are very preciſe. When a perſon receives a viſit in the country, if he knows the world, he muſt not let his viſitor depart, till both the maſter and ſervants are equally fuddled. They ſeldom let the coachman mount his box, till he is not able to keep his ſeat: and for all this they expect to have their day of revenge. In inferiors it is a token of reſpect towards their ſuperiors; and in theſe a teſtimony of good-nature to thoſe below them: in a word, it is one of the eſſential articles of Engliſh civility. And here likewiſe the politeneſs of the Chineſe agrees with that of the Engliſh: in China they think they have not given a good dinner, unleſs the gueſts are all drunk at breaking up.

The greateſt inconvenience of this cuſtom is, that it encourages a vice in ſervants, to which the lower people are but too much inclined, and which diſables them from ſerving their maſters at a time when they ſtand moſt in need of their help. But in this caſe the Engliſh are more indulgent than we are; perhaps becauſe they better know how far human frailty goes in this reſpect. The faults which men pardon the moſt eaſily, are thoſe, to which

they perceive their own inclinations lead them.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XVII.

To the Abbé D'OLIVET;

On Engliſh verſification.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

I Have read your remarks on RACINE with much pleaſure: this ſmall work ſhews the juſtneſs of your taſte, the ſagacity of your judgment, and the great knowledge you have of our language. You do not criticiſe him as a grammarian only, but likewiſe as a philoſopher. Your treatiſe of the French proſody is an excellent performance in its kind. You have the glory of being the firſt writer among us on a ſubject, which is of equal utility to all ſorts of authors. You have even convinced us, that the proſe of our tongue is ſuſceptible of certain numbers, and has its harmony as well as the verſe. Thoſe who have an ear cannot read your tranſlations without perceiving that you yourſelf have given examples of what you teach others: you have as much as poſ-

poſſible imitated the numbers and cadence of CICERO's proſe. Not content with having made a beginning by breaking ground, you have moſt exactly mark'd out the road for penetrating farther. What obligations have not our writers of all kinds to you! For my part, ſir, I ſhould be glad to have it in my power to repay you the pleaſure you have done me, by ſomething in the ſame way that may give you ſatisfaction. But this is hoping too much: every author has not the talent of rendering his work pleaſant to the reader in handling ſubjects of ſo dry a nature.

I ſhould like well enough to entertain you on Engliſh poetry; but MILTON, of whoſe poems one of the members of your academy has given us ſo beautiful a tranſlation, acquaints you with its genius better than any thing I could ſay on the ſubject. Wherefore I will confine myſelf to treat of their verſification, on which it is eaſier for me to ſatisfy you.

You know that the Engliſh have ſhaken off the yoke of rhyme in epic and dramatic poems; but ſtill ſubmit to it in the other kinds of poetry: and their rhymed verſification is pretty much the ſame with ours, which they have copied after. You will judge by what they have preſerved of it, as well by the changes they made therein, of the advantages their poets draw from it. This at leaſt is certain, that if all the differences they have made do not render it more agreeable, they make it eaſier.

For example, the diſtinction of maſculine and feminine rhymes, is not obſerved in Engliſh poetry. Tho' their language has much fewer words that end in *e* mute than ours, yet their verſes abound with thoſe rhymes which we call feminine: ſuch as *fame*, *name*; *love*, *move*; *dance*, *chance*, &c. *ſhore* and *more* in Engliſh have the ſame ſound as *aurore* and *flore* in French. But in this regard the Engliſh poets do what our old poets were wont to do. They admit maſculine and feminine rhymes promiſcuouſly, juſt as they happen to offer. It is true that ſome of their authors have complained, that theſe are not frequent enough in their tongue. The different ſorts of flat rhymes and mixed rhymes, which are more in uſe with us than with them, are ſo many delicacies which pleaſe our ear; and the diſtinction of thoſe that are maſculine and feminine, was not thought of by us, till our poetry began to take a higher flight.

The Engliſh have the ſame ſorts of verſe with us, but they make a very different uſe of them. In tragedy, comedy and moſt other long poems, we generally employ the Alexandrine verſe: the Engliſh on the contrary ſcarce ever admit it. DRYDEN indeed has interſperſed his latter works with ſeveral of theſe: but mr. POPE blames him for it. The Italians and French formerly admitted but five feet or ten ſyllables in a heroic verſe: the Engliſh have retained this cuſtom. And as it is the kind of verſe, to which they have moſt

applied

applied themſelves, they have rendered its mechaniſm eaſier and more diverſified; and thereby, as they tell you, the verſe itſelf more harmonious and agreeable. We conſtantly place the pauſe after the fourth ſyllable.

Je vis ici, grace aux deſtins proſperes,
Comme autrefois vivoient nos premiers peres,
Avec la paix et la frugalité,
Le doux repos et l'aimable gaité,
Des PHILEMONS cherchent les toits ruſtiques,
Les jeux, les ris ſont mes dieux domeſtiques:
Aucun ſouci ne trouble mon ſommeil,
Et le plaiſir m'attend à mon reveil.
Seul de mon tems il diſpenſe l'uſage;
Le gout des fleurs, l'amour du jardinage,
Me font paſſer les plus heureux momens,
Et tous mes ſoins ſont des amuſemens.

This ſameneſs of meaſure in the verſe may at length tire the ear: the Engliſh do not run the ſame riſk: ſometimes they put the pauſe after the fourth ſyllable, as in ours.

" Prevailing warmth * has ſtill thy mind poſſeſt,
" And ſecond youth * is kindled in thy breaſt.

ADDISON to DRYDEN.

At other times they divide the verſe in the middle, as in the following example.

" How

" How long, great Poet, * ſhall thy ſacred lays
" Provoke our wonder *, and tranſcend our praiſe?

ibid.

And ſometimes in fine they place the pauſe after the ſixth:

" Can neither injuries * of time, or age,
" Damp thy poetick heat *, and quench thy rage?

ibid.

The variety of Engliſh verſification depends on the judicious changing and diſpoſitions of the different meaſures.

Mr. POPE, the Engliſh BOILEAU, whoſe ſentiments on this ſubject may be regarded as a law, is of opinion, that in order to give the verſe more harmony and variety, the pauſe at the fourth and ſix ſyllables ſhould not be continued more than three times together, without the interpoſition of another, for fear of tiring the ear by the ſame continued tone: and as the verſe which is cut in the middle by a *Cæſura* runs faſter, he thinks it may be continued longer, without tiring as much as the others.

For my part, I find the pauſe after the ſixth ſyllable heavier than after the fourth: if it be really as languid as it appears to me, we ſuffer no great loſs in not uſing it. But I cannot ſay the

the ſame thing of that which divides the verſe into two equal parts.

" Sur des lits de fleurs * l'aimable jeuneſſe,
" Avec les plaiſirs * folatre ſans ceſſe.

This meaſure, if I miſtake not, is as harmonious as any other, and might be very proper for Lyric poetry. It muſt be allowed, that our verſes of ten ſyllables are too monotonous: the diverſity of pauſes ſeems to remedy this defect in thoſe of the Engliſh. It gives variety and richneſs to their verſification.

One thing peculiar to the Engliſh poets is their reliſh for *triple* rhymes. I paſs directly to an example as the beſt method of explaining myſelf.

Etherial ſweets ſhall next my muſe engage:
And this *Mæcenas*, claims your patronage.
Of little creatures wond'rous acts I treat;
The ranks and mighty leaders of their ſtate,
Their laws, employments, and their wars relate.

ADDISON.

Thus from time to time the Engliſh repeat the ſame rhyme three times, and that in all ſorts of poetry: 'tis their manner of cloſing a ſtretch of thought. Even in tragedy, from which they have baniſhed rhyme, they have recourſe to it for the moſt ſtriking places. 'Tis their way of advertiſing thoſe of the audience whoſe capacity they ſuſpect, that they are to prepare for hearing fine things. They frequently

frequently cloſe every act with a ſtanza of nine or eleven verſes, the three laſt of which rhyme together. They find great charms in this ſort of triplets, and no wonder: 'tis an effect of habit, which makes every thing pleaſant. Yet mr. POPE, to whom I refer for whatever regards Engliſh verſe, finds fault with the frequent uſe of thoſe triple rhymes as a vicious licence, and wiſhes they were never uſed but in paſſages of ſome beauty.

You know, ſir, that one of the greateſt difficulties in our verſification is, that the ſame words have not always the ſame meaſure in the verſe. *Ame*, *femme*, *prendre*, *tendre*, &c. have but one ſyllable at the end of a verſe, or before a vowel; before a conſonant they have two: and ſo of all words of one or more ſyllables ending in *e* mute; they are longer or ſhorter according as they are placed. The Engliſh reckon the *e* mute as nothing, whereever it occurs: *love*, *wine*, *bottle*, *white*, &c. are always monoſyllables in their verſe. 'Tis perhaps what gives them a certain harſhneſs, unknown to ours.

Our cuſtom in this reſpect, by making French verſe ſmoother, may poſſibly render it more feeble and languid. By a contrary practice the Engliſh verſe is ſometimes ſtronger, but generally harſher. If the deſire of expreſſing more matter in few words makes them run the riſk of ſome roughneſs; our fear of offending the ear perhaps makes us expreſs too little. However it cannot be denied that ſu-

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perior genius's find means to ſurmount the greateſt difficulties in all languages. CORNEILLE's verſe is nervous, and WALLER's ſweet.

The Engliſh verſification has a defect very inconſiſtent with harmony, which is, to permit the *Hiatus*. In all languages the poets have been always offended at the diſagreeable claſhing of two vowels. Since MALHERBE piqued himſelf on not ſuffering one ſingle *hiatus*, our good poets have followed his example: and at preſent it is ſo groſs a fault with us that no body commits it. The Engliſh poets, not excepting the moſt famous hitherto, have not been ſo nice. Mr. POPE, who has beſt obſerved its bad effect, has leſs run into it than any of them. Nothing can be reproached to the Engliſh on the ſcore of genius: but perhaps they have been a little too negligent in improving the art.

With regard to our poetry, I am of opinion, that it would be a dangerous enterprize to attempt any innovation. In the point of politeneſs and perfection, to which our great maſters have carried it, we cannot do better than to imitate them. Such as have endeavoured to find different roads from thoſe they traced out to us, have generally gone aſtray.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

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LETTER XVIII.

To Monſieur DE CREBILLON, junior;

On the inconſtancy of the Engliſh and French in their modes of dreſs: with obſervations on the peculiar taſte of the Engliſh ladies in this reſpect.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

I AM ever ſurprized that the good ſenſe of the Engliſh ſaves them not from many ridicules, which ſhould ſeem only to fall to the ſhare of ſo light a nation as ours. All the world knows how high we have carried the extravagance of our modes: yet how ſilly ſoever they are, this wiſe people have adopted them. The Engliſh do ſtill worſe perhaps, they ſtudy like us to invent new faſhions; and in things which depend on taſte, they have very indifferent ſucceſs. You will not find in the two houſes of parliament any of thoſe happy and fruitful genius's, whoſe ſuperior taſte fixes the deſtiny of modes, who riſk all, and make every thing ſucceed; whom all the world condemns, and yet imitates. It is an advantage which ſome of the Engliſh would fain diſpute with us: and I know not why they envy us ſuch a glory. I refer them to your works, to learn what eſteem we have for

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thoſe happy mortals, whom they endeavour to equal.

In regard to the women in England, they affect as much to recede from our faſhions, as the ſprightly men ſtudy to follow them: their taſte agrees but in one point with that of the French ladies: it is juſt as inconſtant. In this country, as well as in ours, nothing is ſo ſubject to change as the womens head-dreſs. *Within my own memory*, ſays mr. ADDISON, *I have known it to riſe and fall above thirty degrees. About ten years ago it ſhot up to a very great height, in ſo much that the female part of our ſpecies were much taller than the men.* For ſeveral years paſt the Engliſh and French ladies are become more humble in this reſpect. The ſex here has lately made a more conſiderable ſacrifice to reaſon: they have greatly contracted the circumference of their hoops. As the French ladies have copied after the Engliſh in their exceſſes, I hope they will have the ſenſe to imitate them in their reformation. If it be too great preſumption to think them capable of ſuch an effort, at leaſt there is nothing but what time brings about, and we may expect great things from their natural inconſtancy.

Generally ſpeaking, it is thought that the women of this country have worſe ſucceſs than the men in inventing modes. Thoſe which our country women invent pleaſe us, or at leaſt we accuſtom ourſelves to them; here on the contrary the ſex contrive ſome, which

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the men cannot endure: and what is very ſingular, 'tis obſerved that the women of condition are the worſt dreſſed. If I dared believe my eyes, I ſhould be of this opinion: but I do not pretend to be learned enough in matters of ſuch importance, to venture to paſs judgment. I ſuſpect only, that in regard to modes, the Engliſh ladies ſtudy the graces leſs than the French, or are not ſo knowing: for it is not to be ſuppoſed that they have leſs deſire to pleaſe.

Some years ago the ladies of the firſt rank had brought up a very extraordinary faſhion, to ſay nothing worſe of it; and that was to wear none but rumpled linnen. Head-dreſſes, ruffles, every thing muſt be ſo: and the art of rumpling a handkerchief for the neck regularly, was then the laſt ceremony of the toilet. I leave you to gueſs at the reaſons for ſuch a faſhion, and whether it was not contrary to that decency, upon which the Engliſh women have always valued themſelves. In their preſent manner of dreſs, they ſeem to endeavour to mimic the London *Griſettes*, who generally pleaſe all thoſe that in love-affairs have no regard to titles. I cannot ſay what views the ladies may have in ſo doing: but this is certain, that the men are moſt obſtinate in giving the preference to the *Griſettes*: perhaps the ſelf-love of ladies of quality will not let them ſee that they reſemble them in nothing but dreſs.

I muſt however remark one thing to the honour of the Engliſh ladies, that there are among them a great number of philoſophers, who take ſuch pride in liberty and independence, that they will by no means ſubmit to the yoke of faſhion, whoſe empire is ſo much revered in France by both ſexes. Nay, in order to outbrave the multitude, from which they ſcorn to receive laws, each of them frequently contrives peculiar modes at all hazards: and whatever is the event, they bear it with moſt intrepid courage and heroic conſtancy: for which reaſon they have a juſt claim to the title of women of fortitude.

If one of theſe ladies has a whimſical headdreſs on, a whole aſſembly may laugh at the oddneſs of the figure ſhe makes, without putting her out of countenance. I have ſeen one of them wear a crown-bird, which may be called monſtrous, in compariſon of thoſe that have appeared in France: all the jokes thrown on her by the company could not determine her to clip the leaſt feather of its wings: probably ſhe found that this headdreſs gave her more of the air of a conqueror. Thus ALEXANDER wore an eagle with expanded wings on his helmet.

Sometimes alſo, for want of invention the ladies of quality here dreſs their heads after the pictures of their anceſtors of the fourth or fifth generation: inſomuch that the opera houſe is the repertory of all the modes, that have been invented theſe two or three hun-

dred years. For my own part, I have obſerved there all the faſhions that ſtarted up in France ſince the time of FRANCIS I.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XIX.

To the Duke DE ***;

On chearfulneſs and gaiety of temper; good and ill-natured raillery: the gloomineſs of the Engliſh, with its bad effects.

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD DUKE,

IT is an effect of your uſual goodneſs, not to forget an unprofitable ſervant: the leſs I deſerve from your grace, the more ſenſible is my pleaſure in receiving pledges of your remembrance in ENGLAND. My moſt reſpectful attachment notwithſtanding, I ſtill find myſelf deeply in debt. How beautiful it is in a perſon of your rank to know how to feel! How happy, to know how to think, and to unite ſuch advantages, as none but thoſe who poſſeſs them ſet a due value on, with thoſe of birth, which are much more

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common, and always over-rated by perſons who enjoy no others.

You have painted yourſelf, without knowing it, in the letter which your grace wrote me. I have found in it all the charms of your converſation, that eaſy natural wit, which writers by profeſſion find difficulty in imitating; that light ſportiveneſs, which is but futility in thoſe who do not think, but is a great ornament in ſuch, as uſe it only in order to make reaſon forget its ſerious tone, and to lend it that of pleaſantry; that lively and amiable gaiety in fine, which is generally a mark of goodneſs of heart and mind *.

Since you vouchſafe to enquire how I ſpend my time, I ingenuouſly confeſs, that now as the language of this country begins to become familiar to me, I ſtudy men more than books: this ſtudy has always been of my taſte, and perhaps it is the moſt uſeful. I reap greater benefit by attending to the converſations of companies where I go, than by reading a volume of the *Spectator* in my cloſet. Nay I now and then perform the functions of that gentleman. This is the native ſoil of philoſophers; and all ranks of men afford ſome: wherefore, wherever I happen to be, I ſeek, I examine. Sometimes I go to make my ſpeculations in thoſe coffee-houſes, where peers of the realm entertain each other on parliamentary affairs: ſometimes in thoſe,

* Gaudium hoc non naſcitur niſi ex virtutum conſcientiâ: non poteſt gaudere niſi fortis, niſi juſtus, niſi temperans. SEN.

where grave miniſters of the church of ENGLAND, with pipes in their mouths, cenſure the Roman clergy. I do not even diſdain to make one of a company of Jack-tars, and to hear them, amidſt their pots and bowls, exclaiming againſt the government, damning the French, and ſwearing to extirpate the Spaniards. A philoſopher who cloſely examines this nation, cannot avoid being ſurprized at the mixture of its virtues and vices. He will ſometimes obſerve, in a man of the meaneſt profeſſion, that nobleneſs and elevation of ſentiments, which bring all conditions near one another: at other times he will ſee a peer not to bluſh for vices which degrade all orders of men.

Nothing is ſo uncommon among the Engliſh as that ſweetneſs of temper, and chearfulneſs of humour, which are the charms of ſociety; and they are great loſers for want of them: they would be much happier, if they were more ſocial. One may aſſert, without wronging them, that they know not how to enjoy life as well as the French. Might not this be a proof, that they are not as much philoſophers as they imagine? The true ones are thoſe who reſemble your grace, I mean the amiable philoſophers. After all, philoſophy is nothing more than the art of making ourſelves happy, that is, of ſeeking pleaſure in regularity, and reconciling what we owe to ſociety with what we owe to our ſelves.

This chearfulneſs, which is a characteriſtic of our nation, in the eye of an Engliſhman paſſes almoſt for folly: but is their gloomineſs a greater mark of wiſdom? And folly againſt folly, is not the moſt chearful ſort the beſt? At leaſt if our gaiety makes them ſad; they ought not to find it ſtrange, if their ſerioufneſs makes us laugh.

As this diſpoſition to joy is not familiar to them, and as they look on every thing as a fault which they do not find at home, the Engliſh who live among us are hurt by it. Several of their authors reproach us with it as a vice, or at leaſt as a ridicule.

Mr. ADDISON ſtyles us a *comic nation*. In my opinion it is not acting the philoſopher on this point, to regard as a fault, the quality which contributes moſt to the pleaſures of ſociety, and happineſs of life. PLATO, convinced that whatever makes men happier makes them better, adviſes to neglect nothing that may excite and convert into an early habit this ſenſe of joy in children. SENECA places it in the firſt rank of good things. Certain it is at leaſt, that gaiety may be a concomitant of all ſorts of virtues, but that there are ſome vices, with which it is incompatible.

As to him who laughs at every thing, and him who laughs at nothing, neither of them has ſound judgment: all the difference I find between them is, that the laſt is conſtantly the moſt unhappy. Thoſe who ſpeak againſt

chearfulneſs, prove nothing elſe but that they were born melancholic, and that in their hearts they perhaps rather envy than condemn it.

The Engliſh *Spectator*, whoſe conſtant object was the good of mankind in general, and of his nation in particular, ſhould, according to his own principles, place chearfulneſs among the moſt deſirable qualities: probably he did not ſufficiently reflect, when he found fault with it ſo openly. To dreſs virtue in the robes of ſadneſs, as moſt men do, is robbing her of her real charms. Mr. ADDISON aſſerts, that gaiety is one of the greateſt obſtacles to the prudent conduct of women: but are thoſe of a melancholic temper, as the Engliſh women generally are, leſs ſubject to the foibles of love? I am acquainted with ſome doctors in this ſcience, to whoſe judgments I would more willingly refer than to his: and perhaps in reality perſons naturally of a gay temper are too eaſily taken off by different objects, to give themſelves up to all the exceſſes of this paſſion.

Mr. HOBBES, a celebrated philoſopher of this nation, maintains that laughing proceeds from our pride alone. This is a paradox, if aſſerted of laughing in general: but all the world know that this writer, tho' eſtimable in other reſpects, thought too ill of human nature. DES CARTES has with juſtice condemned thoſe principles and maxims, which ſuppoſe that all men are bad. To bring the

cauſes

cauſes which mr. HOBBES aſſigns for laughing under ſuſpicion, it is ſufficient to remark that proud people are commonly thoſe who laugh leaſt. Gravity is the inſeparable companion of pride. To ſay that a man is vain, becauſe the play of a kitten, or the aperies of harlequin make him laugh; would be advancing a moſt abſurd propoſition: and this cannot be his meaning. We ſhould diſtinguiſh well between laughter inſpired by joy, and that which ariſes from mockery. The malicious ſneer is improperly called laughter. True it is that pride is the father of this: but that has nothing in its principle or effects, which deſerves condemnation. 'Tis this laſt only that we find amiable in others, and it is a happineſs to feel a diſpoſition towards it in ourſelves. 'Tis this, which you have the talent to excite even in thoſe who are the greateſt ſtrangers to it: becauſe it is a neceſſary conſequence of the pleaſure they feel in hearing you. When I ſee an Engliſhman laugh, I fancy I ſee him hunting after joy, rather than having caught it: and this is more particularly remarkable in their women, whoſe temper is inclined to melancholy. A laugh leaves no more traces on their countenance, than a flaſh of lightning on the face of the heavens. The moſt laughing air is inſtantly ſucceeded by the moſt gloomy: one would be apt to think that their ſouls open with difficulty to joy, or at leaſt that joy is not pleaſed with its habitation there.

In regard to fine raillery, it muſt be allowed, that it is not natural to the Engliſh: and therefore thoſe who endeavour at it make but an ill figure. Some of their authors have candidly confeſſed, that pleaſantry is quite foreign to their character: but according to the reaſon they give, they loſe nothing by this confeſſion. Biſhop SPRAT gives the following one: *the Engliſh*, ſays he, *have too much courage to ſuffer to be derided, and too much virtue and honour to mock others.* Yet when the caſe happens, (and I have ſeen ſome examples of it) the Engliſhman, who for want of honour, takes the liberty of railing at another, and he whoſe courage cannot bear it, ſtrip both to their buff, and box it out till one of them ſays he has got enough. I have likewiſe read in ſome travels, that fiſts are the only arms the Chineſe uſe in their duels.

An offenſive pleaſantry is attended with diſmal conſequences among us. But I do not attempt to juſtify raillery and mockery or unſeaſonable mirth; I only take the part of chearfulneſs. The wretched talent of ridiculing a perſon, to gratify the ill-nature of others, is the mark of a little mind void of honour or elevation. LA FONTAINE has ſaid very well:

" Dieu ne crea que pour les ſots
" Les mechans diſeurs de Bons mots.

I do not enquire whether people of this ſtamp are more common among us than elſe-

where,

where, and believe it better to abandon them all, be the number ever ſo great. If ſeveral of us are vain of ſuch a frivolous and contemptible talent, they appear to me quite as ridiculous as they poſſibly can to any Engliſhman. They commonly incur the hatred of thoſe very perſons, whom they excite to laughter *. I know no vice that is amiable, and will never apologize for ſuch as may happen to be peculiar to my native country. *He*, ſays one of our writers, *who knocks a man down by a* BON MOT, *is little more commendable than he who ſhoots him thro' the head.*

Moreover, if the Engliſh ſeldom laugh, there is a ſet of men in England who never laugh at all, and thoſe are the preſbyterians: they make laughing to be the eighth mortal ſin. According to them, a woman who laughs commits as great a fault, as a woman would among us, in ſwerving from innocence and modeſty. Thus there are families of them, who have never laughed for two or three generations. What errors, what extravagances enter into the heads of men! And how I pity them, when they are poſſeſſed with the diſmal ſort! Theſe auſtere teachers, who ſet up for very ſcrupulous obſervers of ſcripture, would do better to follow this maxim, ſo becoming him whom GOD had endowed

* — — — — — — — — — ſolutos
Qui captat riſus hominum, famamque dicacis
Affectat, niger eſt: huſic, tu Romane, caveto.
HORAT.

dowed with the gift of wiſdom: *the laughter of the wiſeman is ſeen, and not heard* *.

Chearfulneſs does and always will fall to the ſhare of a good-natured, ſociable and well-regulated nation. What people has been more renowned for ſweetneſs of morals and charms of ſociety than the ATHENIANS! And yet were they not at the ſame time the chearfulleſt people of GREECE? Has not ATHENS produced as many great men as auſtere LACEDEMON? In our days, the PERSIANS, the moſt knowing and polite people of the Eaſt, are reputed the moſt chearful. Every where we ſee men more chearful, according as they are more ſociable: and mankind were made to live in ſociety.

If I ſo ſtrenuouſly eſpouſe the cauſe of chearfulneſs, 'tis becauſe it is not only deſirable in itſelf, and for the ſake of thoſe with whom we live; but likewiſe for the benefit of ſociety in general. Good humour is the ſureſt preſcription againſt enthuſiaſm of all kinds. Chearful people do not dream of injuring their neighbours, nor of fomenting ſedition in the ſtate. Their ſole application is to enjoy life, and make the beſt of it.

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Le Rire du ſage ſe voit, & ne s'entend pas. The tranſlator has not found this paſſage, as M. LE BLANC has rendered it, either in the canonical or apocryphal books of holy writ. The paſſage that comes neareſt to it ſeems to be Eccleſiaſticus xxi. 20. *a wiſe man doth ſcarce ſmile a little.*

Somebody has remarked that the Italians have placed ſadneſs among vices, by giving it the name of *malignity*. And indeed ſad and melancholic minds are diſſatisfied with every thing, becauſe they are conſtantly ſo with themſelves: they are daily complaining of the government, and never fail to diſturb it when they find an opportunity. It is people of this turn of mind that ſtir up inſurrections in ſtates of all kinds: and if ſuch troubles have happen'd more frequently in England than in other countries, the reaſon is perhaps, that this diſpoſition of mind is more common here than elſe-where. A dark gloomy humour eaſily lapſes into fanaticiſm; and fanaticiſm leads to every thing. It ſmothers all ſenſe of humanity; and knows not even the voice of nature. The factious ſet of men who cut off the head of king CHARLES I. and thoſe among us, who endeavoured to change the crown of HENRY III. into a Monkiſh crown, certainly were not chearful people. The celebrated BRUTUS, one of CÆSAR's murtherers, was of a melancholic temper. The Engliſh poet, who has beſt painted nature, the general defects of mankind, and thoſe peculiar to his nation, SHAKESPEARE has ſet this truth in a ſtrong light by verſes, which are a proof of the excellency of his judgment, and of the goodneſs of his character. He ſays:

" The

" The man that hath no muſick in himſelf,
" And is not mov'd with concord of ſweet
ſounds,
" Is fit for treaſons, ſtratagems, and ſpoils;
" The motions of his ſpirit are dull as night,
" And his affections dark as Erebus:
" Let no ſuch man be truſted.
MERCHANT of Venice, act v. ſcene 1.

This is to ſpeak as a poet, but to think as a philoſopher. 'Tis foreſeeing effects in their cauſe. Accordingly it is true, that thoſe perſons who are moſt tranſported by muſic, are generally beſt organized for their own happineſs and that of others: they bear the ſame degree of ſenſibility in all their affections. For how much pleaſure are you not indebted, my lord, to the taſte you have for all arts: and as to ſenſibility, if one may judge by the ſtrong paintings you make of it, who enjoys it more than your grace!

Whatever the Engliſh can ſay on chearfulneſs, its effects in general and particular ought to make it be eſteemed as a good. For my own part, while I condemn ſuch of them as blame us for being chearful; I will carefully avoid following their example, and reproaching them for being ſad. We have ſome power over ourſelves; but there are phyſical cauſes, the effect of which cannot be hindered by the beſt uſe of reaſon. When things are cloſely examined, we muſt conſtantly return to this maxim: men are leſs to be blamed in general

than

than pitied. However it be, whether the quality of the climate or any other cauſe makes ſadneſs contagious here, as I am in MONTAGNE's caſe, *and that I neither love nor eſteem it*, if you perceive by my letters that it begins to grow on me, be pleaſed to give me notice; and I ſet out the very inſtant to breath my native air, and reſume my natural tone. Stedfaſtly relying on your goodneſs, I will go to find in the charms of your company, what I might have loſt in that of the Engliſh.

I have the honour to be,

My lord duke,

Your grace's moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XX.

To Monſieur DE BUFFONS;

Deſcribing a contraſt of two ſingular characters, the one in a Frenchman, the other in an Engliſh peer.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

LET the reſolution, which M. DE ** has lately taken, be ever ſo unreaſonable, I am no way ſurprized at it: I know his manner

manner of thinking and acting; and as much as I eſteem his probity and uprightneſs of character, ſo much I diſapprove all his oddities and caprices. It is not enough for a man to be honeſt, he ſhould likewiſe be reaſonable. M. DE ** has ſpent thirty years of his life in hunting after a regimen of health, and a regulation of his affairs. Whatever might have been his conſtitution and fortune, this was the true way to ruin both; and he has accordingly ſucceeded: he would not live as others; and he is puniſhed for it. He goes in vain to Montpellier in ſearch of what he could not find at Paris: he ſtands in need of altering his way of thinking, not the climate. Travelling will be of no ſervice to him: his ſoul is not calm enough to be affected by new objects. The uneaſineſs that makes him fly, will follow him every where: he runs away with himſelf.

It is unhappy for many people to have known this odd man: they imitate him without knowing how far the ſpirit of ſingularity may carry them, and even without attending that the perſon they copy after, is perhaps threatened with ending his days in an hoſpital or mad-houſe. I pity him much: and at the ſame time heartily wiſh that others may profit by his example, and grow wiſer.

I own I have an averſion for every one who affects to deliver himſelf up to the caprices of his taſte and irregularities of his imagination. In ſuch a caſe a man ſeems to quit the com-

mon

mon road, only becauſe he knows a better: but when it conſtantly falls out, that in ſtraying from others he loſes his way, his preſumption ought to expoſe him to the contempt of the company he endeavours to drop. All men have not reaſon enough to be their own guides: they require rules and examples to conduct them.

There have been few men of more ſingularity than the late earl of P**, who died ſome years ſince. This Engliſh nobleman had built himſelf a very particular ſyſtem of life. His character was diametrically oppoſite to that of M. DE **. The latter would fain be always ſick, the former would never own ſo much as that any diſeaſe could poſſibly ſeize him. Far from ever complaining of any thing, he would never allow that any accident whatever was capable of making him unhappy. This was a difficult taſk: but he had ſet the reſolution. The only means which the greateſt philoſophers were able to find, was to arm themſelves with patience to make head againſt ſuch misfortunes as human prudence could not prevent. Our Engliſh philoſopher had invented a ſhorter way, and that was to plead ignorance (if I may be allowed a law-expreſſion) to every diſagreeable thing that could befall him. EPICTETUS, on the death of his wife, would have people ſay, that *ſhe was reſtored to him who gave her*. My Lord P** was reſolved to reſtore nothing of what he had received: in vain was he told of

any

any thing diſmal; he conſtantly maintained there was nothing in it. When his lady died, he would by no means believe it: and as long as he lived, the cover of the deceaſed counteſs was by his expreſs order regularly ſet on the table. If his ſon happened to be abſent, the ſame cuſtom was obſerved. When he himſelf was at the point of death, he ſtood it out that he was not ſick: and a quarter of an hour before he expired, tho' he was perfectly in his ſenſes, he obſtinately inſiſted on getting up, to go and take the air abroad. When men have given a certain turn to their imagination, they become no longer ſenſible of its deviations: they are calmly and coolly unreaſonable, and cloſe the ſcene by being themſelves the dupes of the farces, which they at firſt acted purely to deceive others.

I cannot ſay, if my lord P**, as ſingular as he appears, was not the ape of that old philoſopher, who, ſuffering extremely by a fit of the gout, cried out with gnaſhing his teeth: *No, I will not allow that thou art an evil.* Let us bluſh for our ſpecies, in thinking on all the follies to which it is ſubject: but what moſt ſurprizes me is, that the country where good ſenſe ſeems to be moſt common, ſhould be that in which all ſorts of folly are carried the greateſt length.

I will end my diſcourſe on that kind of Engliſh philoſopher, with a little ſtory, which is in every body's mouth here.

My

My lord C*** a man of as much wit and ſenſe as any in England, paying a viſit to my lord P**, who, notwithſtanding his oddities, had a good ſhare of both; a favourite little dog of the latter bit the former in the leg. *Fear not*, ſays my lord P**, *my little dog never bites.* My lord C***, who had already knock'd down the little creature with a blow of his cane, replied in the ſame ſtrain: *Fear not*, my lord, *I never ſtrike dogs.*

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XXI.

To the Marquis DU T**.

On the two houſes of Parliament.

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD,

THE deſire of knowledge is a proof of underſtanding; the choice of the objects it fixes on is the effect of reaſon: is there any ſtudy more becoming man than that of the nature and laws of different governments? Continue, my lord, to cultivate a taſte, which always ſuppoſes laudable qualities in a perſon

who poſſeſſes it. The habit of purſuing thoſe great objects, gives an elevation to the ſoul, which it does not aſſume in other points of knowledge.

To come to the particular point which excites your curioſity, it appears to me, that the houſe of commons has ſo much authority, only becauſe the houſe of lords is almoſt entirely dependent on the court. This laſt is the great council of the nation; 'tis the privilege of this houſe to put a ſtop to the ſchemes of an ambitious miniſter, and to propoſe meaſures for keeping peace or making war: and it is the buſineſs of the houſe of commons to find means for raiſing the neceſſary ſupplies for maintaining the one, or defraying the expences of the other.

If both houſes are equally eſtabliſhed for taking care of the people, the peers of the realm are born guardians of its rights and liberties. The form of the government gives them both an equal ſhare in the legiſlative power. But what becomes of the wiſeſt conſtitutions, when thoſe who are made to ſupport them, find their intereſt in overturning them! Execution is the life of the laws.

The lords being moſtly united with the ſovereign, their power, which ought to hold the ſcale between the king and the people, I fear, can ſerve only to break the poiſe. Have they not contributed more to extend the prerogatives of the crown, than to preſerve the liberties of the ſubject? Is not this what

what prevents the upper houſe of parliament from having all the credit it ſhould have by its inſtitution? The bench of biſhops is intirely devoted to the court; and the greateſt part of the nobility are no leſs attached to it by the honours they have either received or expect.

A ſtranger admitted into this auguſt aſſembly, cannot avoid having a very high idea of it, when he is witneſs of the noble freedom, with which the intereſts of the people are ſupported, or the conduct of a miniſter inquired into: but the manner of collecting the votes does not come up to that, after which matters are debated. 'Tis generally but a ſort of formality. He is ſcandalized to ſee the clergy conſtantly on the ſide of the ruler, entering into all his views, and favouring all his projects.

After a debate upon matters of the higheſt importance,---he is ſurprized to find one member of this houſe diſpoſing of the votes of ſeveral abſentees. This privilege of the peers to give their votes by proxy, is manifeſtly contrary to the welfare of the nation. Whatever care is taken in chooſing ſuch as they can confide in; tho' they may be ſure of their probity, they cannot always be ſo of their capacity. Does it not happen to perſons of the ſtricteſt honeſty and moſt upright intentions, to think differently on the ſame ſubject? He who is preſent may poſſibly not be moved by thoſe reaſons, which would have convinced the abſentee he repreſents. Thoſe votes which he diſpoſes of, give the ſanction of law to an

act, which the perſons themſelves would perhaps have oppoſed with all their might.

It is by the intereſt the court finds in maintaining this privilege of the lords, that all the attempts of the commons to aboliſh it have proved abortive. It is ſo much the eaſier for a miniſter to make an act paſs in the houſe of lords, as that does not require the attendance even of his faſt friends. In the moſt important queſtions, the third part of the votes that carry them, is frequently of abſent members *. Some of them taken up with their private affairs, others indulging their pleaſures, learn by the public papers, that they have given their votes to additional taxes.

What an abuſe in a body ſo wiſely eſtabliſhed, and how fatal may not the conſequences prove! When the matter under conſideration is the making of laws, on which depend the ſafety and happineſs of a people, ſhould the votes of the abſent be reckoned? How can thoſe, whoſe birth-right it is to guard the intereſts of their country, avoid bluſhing at intruſting others with the care of them! Do they not render themſelves unworthy, both of the rank they hold, and of the

* Among the debates of the houſe of commons, we find this paſſage of one of the members, who pretends to have been often puzzled to know if the houſe of peers were met. *I enquired*, ſays he, *one day, of a dozen people I met in the lobby, if the lords were ſitting? we cannot tell. Do you know if they ſate yeſterday? No. Do you know when they ſate? No*, &c.

the authority repoſed in them, by ſo dangerous an abuſe of the one and the other?

At Rome, where greater attention was given to the public good, the preſence of a certain number of ſenators was neceſſary to authenticate decrees: and a fine was laid on thoſe who did not appear on the ſtated days of meeting.

This privilege of the peers is too contrary to the good of the nation, for thoſe who have that truly at heart to reap any advantage from it. What can their attendance, what can their eloquence do againſt the votes of abſentees! Theſe, lulled to ſleep in the lap of inactivity, baffle the efforts of the moſt zealous patriots.

The members of the houſe of commons likewiſe might well deſerve ſome ſtrictures: the privileges they enjoy, afford them no excuſe for abſenting from parliament. And yet how many are there, who ſeldom or never attend? Can they throw a greater inſult on the people who intruſt them with their rights, than by amuſing themſelves on their eſtates in waging war with foxes, while the nation is debating at London, whether it ſhould declare war with Spain?

Ought the Engliſh to wonder, if ſometimes their kings devolve the weighty burthen of their authority on their miniſters, while thoſe, whom the laws have intruſted with the guardianſhip of their privileges, confide in others for a care, which, as it is the greateſt of all

advantages, ſhould be the moſt ſacred of all their duties?

I have the honour to be,
My lord,
Your lordſhip's moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XXII.

To Monſieur DE LA CHAUSSÉE;

The ſubject of private marriages continued and exemplified in the cuſtom, which prevails among the fair ſex in England, of making love by private meſſages, and public advertiſements.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

IF you are aſtoniſhed, that the laws of England authorize diſſolute wenches to uſe all ſorts of ways to get huſbands; you will not perhaps be leſs ſurprized at ſome cuſtoms, which equally tend to favour matrimony, and for compaſſing it offer honeſter means indeed, but quite unknown to us. Theſe are for virtuous girls, who have lain neglected, and horribly fear to die maids; or for prudent widows, who can find no comfort for the loſs of a firſt huſband, but in the arms of a ſecond. People declare their ſentiments more boldly here than

than elſewhere on all ſubjects: true modeſty is one of the virtues of the ſex in England: but it muſt alſo be allowed, that they know not what it is to practice the falſe.

When a woman has a mind to be married to a young man, whom ſhe has it not in her power to come in company with; ſhe will frequently ſend him a meſſage at once with her propoſal: and the confident will not always ſcruple to tell her name. In the main this cuſtom may not be as much to be condemned as it appears to us: perhaps it is only the effect of the good ſenſe which diſtinguiſhes this nation from all others. At leaſt why ſhould it not be allowed to do, for ſo lawful an end as that of matrimony, what very great ladies among us put in practice with leſs honeſt deſigns.

Again an Engliſh woman takes a liking to ſome perſon in a place where ſhe cannot reveal her mind to him. If he is a ſtranger, and ſhe knows not where to find him; ſhe makes him a declaration of her paſſion in the public papers, deſcribes him from head to foot, that he may not miſtake himſelf; puts him in mind of the time and place where ſhe ſaw him; and appoints a meeting, if he chooſes it. Theſe news-papers are the greateſt conveniencies in the world. If a man wants to borrow money, or ſell a horſe; he adverti ſes the public by this canal. For two ſhillings you may put in what advertiſement you will: and they are of no leſs ſervice for car-

rying on a love intrigue, than for recovering a loſt ſnuff box. Here is an advertiſement, which I read in one of yeſterday's papers.

"IF the young gentleman, who pick'd up "a lady's handkerchief at St. Paul's laſt "Tueſday, and advertiſed it in Wedneſday's "paper, is not married; and that he has the "ſame ſentiments in his heart, which ſhe "thought ſhe read in his eyes; let him give "an account of his ſubſtance, and a deſcrip-"tion of his perſon and qualifications, with "a direction of the place of his uſual reſi-"dence: and the lady who drop'd the hand-"kerchief, will give him an opportunity to "bring it back, and to aſpire to greater fa-"vours."

You think perhaps, ſir, that I joke, and exerciſe my imagination on a ſubject that may admit of it: but if you will not take my word, I have the very news-paper before me, and will ſend it to you. I have likewiſe kept another publiſhed three months ago, which contains a much more ſingular advertiſement. I give it to you word for word.

"THIS is to give notice to all perſons "whom it may concern, that a wi-"dow of between thirty and forty years of "age, of a good family and conſiderable for-"tune, of a ſtrong conſtitution, tho' fair; "and as to her figure paſſable at leaſt; in-

"tends

" tends in the courſe of this month to deliver
" up her perſon and fortune to a man, in
" quality of her true and lawful huſband, who
" has the following qualifications.

" Firſt, it is required, that he be come to
" the age of maturity, that is, from twenty to
" five and twenty.

" Secondly, that he be of a good conſtitu-
" tion, which has not been hurt by debau-
" chery, nor ſubject to the ſpleen, vapours,
" or any other melancholic diſpoſition.

" Thirdly, he muſt be brown-haired, and
" of a middle ſtature: ſhe has reaſons for not
" liking a man of too large a ſize, and thinks
" that the little is not always to be depended
" on. As to his face, it will be ſufficient if
" he is not quite ugly: but ſhe will abſolute-
" ly reject an *Adonis*, becauſe ſhe would have
" a huſband to herſelf alone.

" Fourthly, for worldly ſubſtance ſhe de-
" ſires none of him, provided he has all the
" other qualifications required. She does not
" ſo much as inſiſt on his having been in
" France; if he is otherwiſe well-bred, good-
" natured, complaiſant, and knows how to
" behave towards women. However upon
" an equality of all other circumſtances, a
" perſon who has ſpent two years at Paris,
" ſhall have the preference.

" Fifthly, he muſt make outward profeſſi-
" on at leaſt of the eſtabliſhed religion; for
" fear that a non-conformiſt, under pretence
" of tying his wife down to the ſeverity of the

" goſpel,

" goſpel, ſhould take it into his head to en-
" ſlave her to his caprices, fix the hour and
" time to be ſpent at her toilet, retrench orna-
" ments of dreſs, regulate her occupations,
" forbid her public diverſions, and deprive her
" of lawful and faſhionable amuſements.

" Thoſe who have any pretenſions, are
" deſired to ſend their names, and where they
" may be enquired after, in a letter ſealed and
" put under cover to mr. TOMPSON banker
" in Fleet-ſtreet.

" N. B. Notice is given to all clergymen,
" tho' ever ſo young and conceited of their
" perſons, not to give themſelves any pains.
" The gentlemen of the black gown are
" excluded the liſts, on account of the
" gloomineſs they generally ſpread in fami-
" lies.

" Smoakers are likewiſe excepted againſt;
" becauſe thoſe who have contracted this
" naſty habit, either love not their own
" home, or bring bad company to it."

Let us not condemn the manners of our neighbours. If our *Police* tolerated ſuch public advertiſements, how many women would gladly take the advantage of this method? and how many Paris writers would be found mean enough to become meſſengers and ſecretaries of ſuch negotiations?

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

To the Abbé DU BOS;

On the ſtate of painting and ſculpture in England.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

YOU have given us an excellent treatiſe on poetry and painting, in which, purſuant to HORACE's rule, you have conſtantly united them as two ſiſters. I have ſpoken here of the new edition you are preparing; and it is expected with great impatience. M. DE MOIVRE, who is not leſs a lover of the elegant arts than of geometry, deſires a copy, and at the ſame time ſends you his compliments.

Tho' painting and poetry have certainly a great mutual reſemblance, yet to me they do not appear to have the ſame origin. The common maxim, that the ſame genius that makes poets forms painters, is perhaps received, like many others, purely for want of being examined. In general men had rather believe, than ſift things to the bottom.

In this country at leaſt this maxim is contradicted by experience. England has produced ſeveral celebrated poets. There are few

in

in any nation, who may be compared with MILTON. Mr. POPE ſupports the honour of the Engliſh muſes with dignity: and yet England has not hitherto bred one painter. Painting, ſculpture and the other arts that depend on drawing, are as yet either unknown here, or in their infancy at moſt.

The contrary has happen'd in other countries. If the enchanting art of poetry has not been happily cultivated by the Flemiſh, they have made ſuch progreſs in the no leſs charming art of painting, as has given jealouſy to their neighbours. How high has not RUBENS's happy genius ſoared? What honour has not been done to his country, and even to his age, by this great man, who may be ſtiled the RAPHAEL of the Flemiſh ſchool.

This ſame RUBENS, the famous VAN DYKE, and ſome other maſters of reputation, have painted in England, without being able to form diſciples worthy of them. Examples have only ſerved to put them upon making unſucceſsful trials. The Engliſh have been, for ſome time paſt, ſtripping Italy and France of the moſt exquiſite paintings they can find. In the rich collection of ſir ROBERT WALPOLE, I have with regret ſeen one of the fineſt pictures that POUSSIN ever painted, *The ſtriking of the rock*, which I had left in Paris at my departure. There are ſeveral other collections in London, where young men may form their taſte. Thoſe who take to painting, follow the example we ſet them, and go to Italy, to

ſtudy

ſtudy after the grand compoſitions of RAPHAEL, JULIO ROMANO, and ſo many other great maſters of the different ſchools. In fine, you know, ſir, that the people of quality in England have ſuch noble thoughts of the arts, that, not content with honouring and rewarding them, ſome of them take pride in cultivating them themſelves. It is aſtoniſhing, that the paſſion they expreſs in this reſpect, is ſo ill ſeconded by thoſe who would find ſo much intereſt in gratifying it. But in vain are the ſeeds of arts imported hither, the ſoil ſeems not to be proper for them. They have not the ſame ſun to make them grow: and if they ſhoot a few roots, they are ſoon kill'd by productions of bad taſte, the plant that thrives and multiplies the moſt eaſily in this climate.

True it is, that Paris has the advantage of London in an academy of painting. LEWIS XIV, to whom the elegant arts are ſo much indebted, has done more ſtill: he has founded a ſecond at Rome for the improvement of the young ſtudents of our nation. But POUSSIN, LE SUEUR, painters who have done moſt credit to France, were prior to theſe noble eſtabliſhments. In all kinds of ſtudy, ſchools improve a genius, but give it not. They facilitate the progreſs of the mind by teaching the mechanical parts of an art: but the attainment of thoſe, on which perfection depends, requires a natural diſpoſition. Schools of painting ſerve chiefly for giving a taſte of drawing to artiſts of all ſorts: but they alone

will

will never enable a man to replace a LE MOINE or a PUGET. I am not afraid to ſay, that the beſt ſilver-ſmith of London is but a workman. A GERMAIN, a MESSONIER are other ſort of men: they are draughts-men, they are engravers, they are great men in their way.

However, we muſt confeſs this truth, that the Engliſh have had one painter, or at leaſt perſuade themſelves ſo: for as ſuch they look on ſir JAMES THORNHILL, who painted the dome of St. Paul's, Greenwich, and ſeveral other great works which you have ſeen. Nevertheleſs, as much a *Connoiſſeur* as you are in painting, I fancy you would be puzzled to decide, not in what part the painter excelled, but that in which he is leſs faulty.

This, if I miſtake not, is the only Engliſh painter, who dared to aſpire to that kind of painting, which requires a genius that nature had refuſed him: all the reſt have been obliged to reduce themſelves to portrait-painting: and it is ſurprizing that even in this way not one of them deſerves to be named. And accordingly they have practiſed this noble profeſſion as the meaneſt trade, for money alone, without the leaſt ambition of fame. The thirſt of gold renders men induſtrious; but that of reputation can alone make great men.

As to ſir GODFREY KNELLER, whom the Engliſh have adopted, and you might have ſeen in London; tho' they have erected a ſtately monument for him in Weſtminſter-abby;

abby; tho' mr. DRYDEN has much celebrated him, and mr. POPE tranſlated RAPHAEL's famous latin epitaph * for him; you would blame me, if I acknowledged any other merit in this German, than the judgment he ſhewed in chooſing England for the place to exerciſe his talent in: it is the only country where he could poſſibly gain ſo much credit and honour: any where elſe they would not beſtow the name of a painter on him.

If you believe the Engliſh, mr. GABRIEL CIBBER ||, who cut the *Baſſo-relievo's* of the monument, was another PRAXITELES: but does he even deſerve to be ranked among the moſt ordinary ſculptors? At preſent they have one RYSBRACK, a Fleming, whom they likewiſe hold in high eſteem: they have employed him in ſeveral monuments of great men, and he has juſt finiſhed a buſt of MILTON: but certainly he does not reſtore life to the dead. Both mr. CIBBER and mr. RYSBRACK appear to me as far below a PUGET and a BOUCHARDON, as ſir GODFREY KNELLER was below a RAPHAEL.

The portrait-painters are at this day more numerous and worſe in London than ever they have

* Living great nature fear'd he might outvy
Her works; and dying, fears herſelf may die.

Hic ſitus eſt RAPHAEL, timuit quo ſoſpite vinci
Rerum magna parens, & moriente mori.

|| Father of the preſent player.

have been. Since mr. VANLOO came hither, they ſtrive in vain to run him down; for no body is painted but by him. I have been to ſee the moſt noted of them; at ſome diſtance one might eaſily miſtake a dozen of their portraits for twelve copies of the ſame original. Some have the head turned to the left, others to the right: and this is the moſt ſenſible difference to be obſerved between them. Moreover, excepting the face, you find in all, the ſame neck, the ſame arms, the ſame fleſh, the ſame attitude; and to ſay all, you obſerve no more life than deſign in thoſe pretended portraits. Properly ſpeaking, they are not painters: they know how to lay colours on the canvas, but they know not how to animate it. Nature exiſts in vain for them, they ſee her not: or if they ſee her, they have not the art of expreſſing her. Thoſe who poſſeſs this talent, as a RIGAUD and a LA TOUR, deſerve alone to be honoured with the name of painters.

In painting, as in poetry, the two extremes ſeem to be the ſublime and the burleſque. It may be ſaid in ſome meaſure that CALLOT is to RAPHAEL what SCARRON is to VIRGIL. The genius of the Engliſh painters has not only found itſelf too weak to riſe to the majeſty of the firſt kind; they have not been happier whenever they attempted to deſcend into all the oddities of the ſecond, which indeed is that they have practiſed moſt. They have not better ſucceſs in expreſſing the ramblings

ramblings of fancy, than in copying the beauties of nature: which is a proof how much every thing that comes within the province of taſte, is foreign to the inhabitants of this iſle: for even theſe compoſitions, how extravagant ſoever they may appear, are ſuſceptible of it. The pleaſantries of their pictures are like thoſe of their writings, flat, heavy, and over-done: they are a ſort of national pleaſantries, which divert none but themſelves. Thoſe political prints, which appear daily againſt the miniſtry, are all of this ſtamp: they have not the leaſt delicacy, and are remarkable only for the groſſneſs of the ſatyr. And yet they aſſume a vanity from this mock talent, and believe that other nations are in fault, if they are not affected by it. The ridiculous inclination of the Chineſe to paint the groteſque makes the greateſt part of the Europeans think that they are all deformed. The Engliſh have this bad taſte for *Caricatura*.

To ſucceed in the groteſque, as well as to hit the agreeable, invention alone is not ſufficient: the great ſecret is to know where to ſtop, and our neighbours, who over-do every thing, know no bounds in a ſort that permits them to give full ſcope to their imagination. But yet it is certain that the Engliſh would have leſs regard for this ſomewhat ignoble way of painting, if they were as much hurt as we by low diſguſting objects, which are the foundation of it. In that which requires a nobleneſs and elevation, they have ſhewn an

inſufficiency, or rather a total inability; the ſole cauſe of which is perhaps, that their ſenſations in general are not ſo fine and delicate as thoſe of the people of the Southern countries. They breath a thicker air, and ſeldomer ſee the ſun: and that is ſufficient to cauſe a great difference in their organs.

To conclude, thoſe of them who have the talent to paint nature in burleſque, ennoble it by the uſe they make of it: they employ it to give a diſreliſh to vice.

The Luxembourg gallery by RUBENS, or the battles of ALEXANDER by LE BRUN never had a greater run in our country, than a ſet of prints actually have in England, engraved lately from pictures of a man of genius in this way, but who is as bad a painter, as he is a good ſubject. They have made the graver's fortune who ſells them; and the whole nation has been infected by them, as one of the moſt happy productions of the age. I have not ſeen a houſe of note without theſe moral prints, which repreſent in a groteſque manner the Rake's Progreſs in all the ſcenes of ridicule and diſgrace, which vice draws after it; ſometimes even in thoſe circumſtances, the reality of which, if tolerably expreſſed, raiſes horror: and the Engliſh genius ſpares nothing that can inſpire it. Thus the ancients were of opinion, that nothing could give ſuch an averſion for intemperance, as the very ſight of a perſon labouring under the effects of it. I verily believe

that

that ſuch pictures make a deeper impreſſion on a people like this, who delight in ſtrong repreſentations, than the moſt ſenſible reflections, or the moſt pathetic diſcourſes. What do I ſay? The human kind are the ſame every where: whatever end is propoſed, it is ſurer and eaſier to make an impreſſion on the ſenſes, than to convince the underſtanding.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XXIV.

To Monſieur DE BUFFONS;

On a character of great and laudable ſingularity in an Engliſh peer.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

IN my laſt letter I gave you an account of a very ſingular man: England affords ſome of all kinds. 'Tis the country where the greateſt number of ſtriking examples are found of all ſorts of vices and virtues.

A circumſtance which has fallen out this very day, gives me an opportunity of ſaying two words of one of the greateſt lords of this court, whoſe ſingularity, which is thought re-

remarkable even in this country, would in ours be deem'd a prodigy, and ought to paſs every where for a virtue. This perſon of ſo uncommon a character is the duke of D***, who to the ſplendor of very high birth, and a great eſtate, joining the eminent virtues of his anceſtors, is nevertheleſs ſo plain in his manners, ſo void of all pomp, and in a word ſo little ſuſceptible of vain-glory; that the regard due to his rank, and the reſpect he himſelf gains, equally embaraſs him. He ſhuns them as earneſtly as others ſeek them. The greateſt part of thoſe, to whom, for the ſake of order in ſociety, it has been agreed to give the appellation of nobles or great men, eſteem thoſe forced honours as the faireſt flower of their birth. If they are content with their condition, it is becauſe they fancy it envied by others. In their high ſtation they love nothing better than the humiliation, in which it keeps thoſe about them. O! How many ill turns ſelf-love does to mankind! That pride, which moſt of the great affect, is a proof of their little merit: they always have the air of being the moſt ſurprized at the honours they are adorned with; and this is a kind of acknowledgment how unworthy they find themſelves of them. The virtuous man is neither abaſed nor puffed up; by an equal fortitude in good and bad fortune, he ſees nothing in birth but the effect of chance, and nothing but his duty in what others call virtue.

tue. Such is the Engliſhman, of whom I am ſpeaking: he is a ſtranger to all other privileges of his rank but the power of being uſeful to his country, and knows not that there are men below him, but by the means he finds of doing them good. The leſs he requires reſpect, the more zealouſly it is paid him. How really little are men, who ſet ſo high a value on their pretended greatneſs! How effectually great are thoſe, who like the duke of D * * * regard as a duty to be ignorant of it! He has been juſt now appointed lord-lieutenant of Ireland. Sir ROBERT WALPOLE ſaid on this occaſion. *There is the duke D * * * greatly embaraſſed: he will be obliged to have a court, officers and guards about him: I believe that amidſt all this grandeur, he will not find himſelf much at his eaſe.* What an elogy on the vice-roy is this joke of the miniſter!

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XXV.

To Monſieur DE LA CHAUSSÉE;

On the encouragement given to arts and ſciences in England and France: with ſome ſtrictures on the Engliſh manner of publiſhing books by ſubſcription.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

YOU know that one of the things, on which the Engliſh value themſelves moſt, is their regard for arts and ſciences: they are perſwaded, as well as all the polite nations of Europe, that as arms are the ſupport of a ſtate, ſo letters are the ornament of it, and arts one of the principal ſources of its riches. In this reſpect let us give them all the commendations they deſerve. But in doing juſtice to their way of thinking, I would not have ours blamed without grounds. Thoſe who would ſend us to their ſchool, cannot deny but that we firſt ſet them the example in this point. Let us not ſtop at the extravagant praiſes they laviſh on them, nor at the reproaches, perhaps equally unjuſt and partial, which they load us with; but let us compare, and ſee if there are better rewards in England

for

for men of letters, or if they are more honoured in France.

I will not ſpeak of the univerſities; their caſe is much the ſame in both countries: and if the fellowſhips and preferments in them are more lucrative here, it is becauſe there are but two univerſities in this kingdom, and we have thirty in ours.

As to thoſe ſocieties now eſtabliſhed in all parts of Europe to facilitate the progreſs of ſciences, in England there is but the royal ſociety of London, which perhaps is too numerous to be well compoſed; and for which the government is at no expence. I do not know of one penſion founded here for any man of letters, except that which the *poet laureat* enjoys: and this only expoſes him to the ſatyr and contempt of all his brethren; which is buying it dear.

In Paris we have three academies, which all equally contribute either to the glory or benefit of the ſciences. We have ſeveral others eſtabliſhed in our different provinces. I am apprized from Dijon, that a counſellor of the parliament of Burgundy has by his will lately founded a new one in a town, which glories in having given birth to ſeveral French academicians, as BOSSUET, BOUHOURS, LA MONNOIE and CREBILLON. The metropolis of the kingdom has moreover the advantage of an academy of painting and ſculpture, one of architecture, and one of ſurgery. The academy of ſciences, and that of inſcriptions, have

the diſpoſal of twenty penſions each. The king's liberality beſtows ſeveral other extraordinary penſions.

In thoſe ſeveral academies, I ſee prizes founded for poetry, eloquence, mathematics, hiſtory and the elegant arts. LEWIS XIV. who neglected nothing that could tend to improve them, eſtabliſhed a ſchool of painting at Rome, and rewards for ſuch as ſignalized themſelves. The prizes, which the academy of ſciences gives, do not contribute leſs to make them flouriſh all over Europe, than to ſpread the glory of the French nation. The learned of the firſt rank contend for them: the EULER's and BERNOUILLI's conſecrate their lucubrations towards meriting them. Will you not grant me, ſir, that if the Engliſh love the ſciences better than we, it is ſtrange (I ſhould not ſay it, if truth did not authorize me) that the only prizes founded here are for horſe-racing.

I might in this place mention the king of France's library: tho' it be the richeſt collection of books in Europe, it is more remarkable on another account. The learned, to whom the care of it is committed, are ſo many famous men, whom the king's magnificence amply provides for, in order to communicate its treaſures to the public, and encourage them to encreaſe it by their own productions.

Several Frenchmen will tell you, that at London FARINELLI has gained immenſe

ſums

ſums in one winter; and they will tell you but the truth. Yet all this liberality of the Engliſh is but the effect of their oſtentation; it is not even a proof of their taſte for Italian muſic. At leaſt, while they pay ſuch high prices to thoſe who excel in an art, that ought to appear frivolous to them; it is ſurpriſing that a gentleman, who has rendered himſelf ſo valuable in that ſcience which they honour moſt, that mr. DE MOIVRE one of the greateſt mathematicians in Europe, who has lived fifty years in England, has not had the leaſt reward made him; he, I ſay, who, had he remained in France, would enjoy an annual penſion of a thouſand crowns at leaſt in the academy of ſciences.

True it is, that men of letters make much more of their works here than in France. A book which a Paris bookſeller would buy for a hundred crowns, will produce two thouſand at London by way of ſubſcriptions. This is a ſnare, which mercenary writers have contrived to lay for the vanity of men, to force them into liberality. At the price of two or four guineas, one's name is inſerted in the liſt of protectors of literature, and of this or that learned man in particular. Thus thoſe authors who regard their profeſſion purely as a mercenary art, are in the right to give the Engliſh the preference in this point: but ſuch as have the ſame elevated ſentiments with you, ſir, think of them in a different manner.

The

The benefits which accrue to Engliſh writers from thoſe ſubſcriptions are much ſpoken of at Paris; but the humiliation that rebounds on them is not known. As much as ſubſcriptions flatter the ſelf-love of the great, who diſtinguiſh themſelves by their generoſity; ſo much do they mortify that of the author who receives them, unleſs he has the misfortune to have mean notions. He is obliged to carry his liſt from door to door; or, which is nearly the ſame thing, a pretty woman muſt lay the whole court under contribution to him; or leading men thoſe of their party. Sir ROBERT WALPOLE's enemies have been taxed to a man for *Leonidas*. What can be more mortifying than thus to go begging! and is it much leſs, to be indebted to another for ſuch collections?

The caſe is the ſame with regard to theatrical benefits. They produce but in proportion to the number of women of faſhion a perſon has, who will take upon them to put off the tickets and receive the guineas. In France, an author publiſhes his work, and whoever is curious to ſee it, buys it. A play is acted, and they that will, go to it. In a word none are compelled to any meanneſs, which may diſhonour the profeſſion of letters.

Thoſe numerous liſts of ſubſcribers, ſo much boaſted of, prove nothing more, than that wealthy folks ſell the protection, which 'tis thought they beſtow on the learned. He whoſe name is ſet down in the front of the book

book for a dozen of copies, makes a figure for his pretended liberality: and the humble author ſeems by publiſhing it to receive it as alms. However that be, the Engliſh are become ſenſible of the abuſe of ſubſcriptions. The number and avidity of middling authors have ſo tired, if not drained, the generoſity of real lovers of learning, that ſeveral of them have agreed never to ſubſcribe to any book. This notice I think proper to give to ſuch of our writers, as having bundles of their productions ready for the preſs might be tempted to import them into this country.

As no intereſt can make me diſguiſe truth, I muſt not paſs over in ſilence what does moſt honour to the Engliſh, and that is, to have raiſed ſome men of letters to the firſt employments in the miniſtry. Mr. ADDISON was ſecretary of ſtate, and mr. PRIOR embaſſador to France. Others, as mr. LOCKE, have been loaded with riches. Sir ISAAC NEWTON was maſter of the mint. I could wiſh the ſame cuſtom obtained among us: but I will ingenuouſly confeſs, that if there are no men of letters in France, who make ſuch fortunes, there are a much greater number penſioners to the government. At their head appears a member of your academy, equally admired for the charms of his wit, and extent of his knowledge, who firſt drew philoſophy out of the cloſet, and introduced it into the world, and who has a juſt claim to the title of the nation's man. This great natural philoſopher,

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for whom nature has no ſecrets, and who makes us admire the wiſdom of the CREATOR even in the leaſt inſect, enjoys a diſtinguiſhed recompence, which does no leſs honour to his merit than to the ſovereign of whom he holds it.

I find another difference between France and England with reſpect to men of letters, which is, that here a greater number of them are raiſed to the dignities of the church. Dr. POTTER, a very learned antiquarian, is the preſent archbiſhop of Canterbury. The clergy and literature would be equal gainers, if this example were followed in France. Let us however tell the whole truth: if ſo many biſhopricks are given to ſimple doctors of the univerſities, 'tis for want of perſons of condition to aſk for them. Do you think that a duke's brother would not be preferred before the beſt Grecian in England? But the clergy's attachment to the court renders it odious to a great part of this nation; and the different ſects tolerated here have thrown ſuch a contempt on the heads of the eſtabliſhed church, that the nobility abſolutely diſdain to accept thoſe honours.

I have known ſome ſenſible men in our country pretend, that, at leaſt for the ſake of thoſe who take pains, it is not wrong to complain and give out that the ſciences are better rewarded elſe-where. Thus ſome Engliſh politicians maintain, that whatever the conduct of the court may be, 'tis always right to

ſpeak

ſpeak againſt the chief perſon in power; in order to reſtrain him, if he has bad deſigns; and to keep him ſteady, if he has good. And yet I cannot ſay, if thoſe who have the diſpenſation of favours might not be rendered more friendly to the muſes, by extolling the reception they meet with from ſeveral of them. Without pointing the ſhafts of ſatyr, perſons in power may be made ſenſible, how much it is the intereſt of the ſtate and their own to protect letters. I cannot think that the right way to gain thoſe we ſtand in need of, is to begin by making them fear us.

Can arts, without ingratitude, avoid acknowledging what they owe to the care of a miniſter, who is their protector at this day, and has drawn them out of the languiſhing ſtate, into which they were beginning to lapſe in France? Who can, without injuſtice, deny due praiſe to him, who ſhews himſelf equally zealous for the intereſt and honour of his country, and for the glory and utility of the ſciences? Thoſe academicians, who are actually meaſuring a degree of the earth, ſome in the ſcorching heats of *Quito*, others on the benumbing ice of *Torno*, demonſtrate to all the world, and will let poſterity know the miniſter's great love, and the ſovereign's glorious protection of ſciences. How much ſoever the Engliſh are concerned in ſettling the figure of the earth, which in all probability ſir ISAAC NEWTON firſt knew; and whatever advantages may accrue to navigation from the

experiments

experiments now making by thoſe learned men in two ſo very diſtant parts of the globe; I doubt the Engliſh government would never have furniſhed theſe truly royal and magnificent expences, to aſcertain its real form.

Thoſe *Literati*, who make ſuch loud complaints, that the miniſtry does nothing for them, are not always the perſons, whoſe labours are moſt beneficial to the ſtate. Generally ſpeaking, the leſs merit they have, the more value they ſet on themſelves. Whatever their qualifications happen to be, thus much is certain, that the conſtant effect of ſuch complaints is to render them deſpicable. They diſcloſe their low mercenary views. Without mentioning a number of learned men, whoſe memory they diſhonour, I am ſorry that M. DES HOULIERES has given room for this reproach. This failing is almoſt an epidemical diſeaſe in the republic of letters. The moſt part of authors have complained of the injuſtice of their age; and at the bottom all thoſe invectives which they pour forth both againſt fortune and their cotemporaries, are but crafty *encomiums* on their own merit, the uſefulneſs of which their ſelf-love makes them exaggerate. It is aſtoniſhing to ſee thoſe, whom the god of riches has regarded with the moſt favourable eye, mixing in the choir of male-contents: ſome in the lap of plenty murmur both againſt the caprice of fortune, and the injuſtice of the times. BAYLE had reaſon to ſay, that thoſe complaints are pretty often rather a mark of the ingratitude of

authors

authors towards their age, than a token of the ingratitude of the age towards thoſe authors.

What poet was ever more regarded in any nation than the great CORNEILLE was in ours! In his time the ſtage of the play-houſe was ſet with chairs inſtead of benches: he had a particular ſeat, which thro' reſpect for him no body would take. As ſoon as he came in, he had the ſame honours paid him as princes of the blood: the whole company roſe to him. Are we then ſo barbarous, becauſe we cannot think that literary merit is ſufficient for taking a man into the privy council. The great men, with whom you are familiar, ſir, are good proofs that talents are no where more honoured than in France, when they are accompanied with good morals. But what are the *Agrémens* of the wit in ſociety, if the good qualities of the heart are wanting! Men are equally unjuſt and inſignificant: they would fain attain the end, without taking the means. How many of thoſe, who are made for aſpiring to be taken notice of, do not always take the only means of obtaining reſpect, I mean honourable means! Let us go to the ſource of the moſt part of thoſe declamations and general complaints; and we ſhall generally find them grounded on particular diſſatisfactions: it happens frequently that men of letters do not render themſelves reſpectable enough, and then it is that they make the loudeſt complaints of not being ſufficiently reſpected.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

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LETTER XXVI.

To Monſieur DE BUFFONS;

On the beauties of the country of England, the richneſs of the ſoil, and induſtry of the inhabitants.

NEWARK in Nottinghamſhire, &c.

SIR,

IN the heart of France you live as people live in England: the amuſements of the town ceaſe to affect you, from the moment that you have it in your power to taſte thoſe of the country. How pleaſing it muſt be to you who love it, that the kind of ſtudy you apply to, calls you thither early in the ſeaſon! It is as happy to be able to make a pleaſure of buſineſs, as it is dangerous to make a buſineſs of pleaſures. I ſuſpected that I ſhould not paſs this month without receiving a letter dated at Montbard: this is the ſeaſon to ſay: happy thoſe who live in the country!

The poets have for theſe two thouſand years paſt regretted the loſs of the golden age; which I wonder at, becauſe in my opinion it is not yet over: it exiſts and always will exiſt in the country; and you have certainly found it in the place of your preſent abode. This month paſt that I am on the banks of the Trent,

Trent, I reliſh all the ſweets of that peaceable life, which conſtituted the happineſs of our firſt parents. The iron age is only felt in towns; becauſe they are the center of detraction, envy, ambition, and perfidy. They are unknown in the country, unleſs they are brought there. But how many people are followed thither by a train of all vices. They live there as in town, poſſeſſed with the ſame cares, intoxicated with the ſame follies, or devoured by the ſame paſſions. Thoſe will never know the happy days of the golden age. The iron age will purſue them every where.

As to the country in England, of which you require ſome account from me, till you can come and judge of it yourſelf; I previouſly anſwer for the ſatisfaction you will ſome day or other have in ſeeing this kingdom: every thing contributes to render it equally agreeable and fertile, both the quality of the climate, and the induſtry of the inhabitants. After having ſeen Italy, you will ſee nothing in the buildings of London, that can give you much pleaſure. That city is really wonderful only for its bigneſs. On the contrary whoever has eyes, muſt be ſtruck with the beauties of the country, the care taken to improve lands, the richneſs of the paſtures, the numerous flocks that cover them, and the air of plenty and cleanlineſs which reigns in the ſmalleſt villages. Thoſe who do not look on England as a very fruitful country, are vaſtly miſtaken.

The Engliſh make ſeveral millions every year of their ſuperfluous corn.

We are difficult to be perſuaded, that violent cold weather is leſs common here than in France; and yet it is true that the fogs, which frequently overſpread this iſland, equally defend it from exceſſive heat and cold. Thoſe thick vapours are perhaps as beneficial for the earth, as prejudicial to the health of the inhabitants. One proof that they render this climate more temperate than ours, is that ſeveral ſort of trees are raiſed here in the open air, which in France require hot-houſes. The greateſt part of thoſe of Virginia thrive very well in the neighbourhood of London. At Montbard you are obliged to put them up during the winter.

The country here to me appears always ſmiling, becauſe I ſee it always green: yet it is not ſo diverſified as in France. In England, except in ſome counties, there are neither vaſt plains nor high mountains. Nothing aſtoniſhes, but every thing pleaſes the eye. On all ſides you ſee but little hills and riſing grounds, the ſlope of which is as gentle as the aſpect is agreeable. If the foreſts, which formerly covered this country, have almoſt entirely diſappear'd, the copſes and woods that crown thoſe little hills, and the hedges that encompaſs the meadows and fields, give perhaps greater pleaſure to the ſight, and are a proof both of the richneſs of the ſoil, and of the induſtry of the huſbandman. The vaſt

tract

tract of land ſeen from the top of Richmond-hill, has more the air of an immenſe garden than of a country proſpect. It preſents the eye in ſome ſort with an image of the terreſtrial paradiſe.

What moſt contributes here to the beauty of the country, is the great number of parks and pleaſant houſes which adorn it. The proud Seine ſpreads forth ſtately buildings and magnificent palaces on her banks; but the Thames, leſs vain, tho' not leſs opulent, preſents the eye with plain neat houſes, but in ſo great number and ſuch variety, that all around it forms the moſt charming proſpects in the world. In fine, the verdure here exceeds that in France, except Normandy, which has a near reſemblance to England. St. James's park pleaſed my eye with a colour, to which I was a ſtranger. 'Tis pity that this beauty ſhould be owing to a defect, that is, to the moiſture of the ground. All things well examined, every climate has its advantages, and every advantage is attended with its inconveniencies. Let us comfort ourſelves for inhabiting a country, not ſo green indeed, but much drier, and conſequently more healthy.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XXVII.

To Monſieur H***;

Of that ſort of melancholy which proceeeds from uneaſineſs of mind or predominancy of paſſions: with an application to the hypochondrical diſpoſition of Engliſhmen.

NEWARK, &c.

SIR,

YOU bear a celebrated name; and tho' you do not purſue the road of thoſe who made it ſo, you will not render yourſelf leſs illuſtrious. Your talents will do equal honour to your native country; and if they differ from theirs, you at leaſt reſemble thoſe virtuous citizens by the uſe you make of them. From your family you have derived that public ſpirit, which propoſes the advantage of the community in all things. Like them you have nothing in view but the good of mankind. The mind has its diſeaſes as well as the body. Men who ſtand in need of phyſicians of both ſorts, have paid equal honours to HOMER and HIPPOCRATES. Thoſe who have rendered your name famous, have applied themſelves to the knowledge and cure of the diſeaſes, to which the body is liable by its nature and the intemperance of our appetites. You labour to deſtroy the foibles, prejudices, errors, paſſions, and vices of all kinds, which

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are the real diſeaſes of the mind. It is alſo true, that you attain the ſame end by another way: by making mankind wiſer, you prevent the phyſical evil, which they teach to cure. Leſſons of morality are not leſs uſeful for our welfare than thoſe of medicine. Temperance is the beſt preſerver of health.

In the liſt of diſeaſes there is one, which I think to be more your province than that of ordinary phyſicians: you will eaſily gueſs I mean the vapours; it is at leaſt an evil, whoſe effects are as uncertain as the cauſe. You know, ſir, they are ſo common in this country, that they are looked upon as contagious; and yet I have hitherto had the good fortune to ſtand in defiance of them with impunity: not that I have any particular ſecret to guard againſt them; but I ſincerely own, that what prevents my fearing them is, that I have no faith in that opinion.

I do not pretend to deny that there are real vapours, but they are uncommon among men: nor do I ſpeak of thoſe which are peculiar to women, and are the effect of their particular conſtitutions. If the very air we breath can have an influence on our temperament; it is not leſs true, that in ſeveral caſes we go a great way in ſearch of the cauſe of an evil, the principle of which is within us. We pity, when we ought to accuſe ourſelves.

The vapours I ſpeak of, are thoſe, which ſhould perhaps be regarded only as a mark of a depraved imagination: I ſuſpect that many

of thoſe who complain of them, are leſs ſick in body than in mind; and that in general they more affect the head than the ſtomach or nervous ſyſtem.

In the greateſt part of the men vapours are nothing but violent uneaſineſs: and I own that uneaſineſs is the moſt cruel of all diſtempers. The ſoul and body act mutually and neceſſarily on each other. In this ſenſe the vapoured have reaſon to complain: for no creatures can be more unhappy. But they will not confeſs that they are uneaſy, for fear of diſcovering a fault in their mind, or an irregularity in their appetites. By the diſeaſe they affect, they ſurprize our pity; whereas a confeſſion of the truth would but mortify their ſelf-love. We derive a ſort of vanity from our unhappineſs, but we are always ſecretly aſhamed of our defects. At leaſt we had rather appear ſick than fooliſh; and ſome grains of folly may poſſibly be an ingredient in the moſt part of vapours. This was monſieur CHIRAC's opinion. That great phyſician, equally incapable of flattering the madneſs of a man, and of miſtaking a diſorder of the mind for a bodily diſeaſe, one day found himſelf hard preſſed by a perſon troubled with vapours of this ſort, who had been a long while teizing him for a remedy for this pretended ill. M. CHIRAC, put to his ſhifts, anſwered with a ſeverity inherent to his character, that the only remedy he had to recommend to him, was to go and aſſaſſinate ſome body on the high-

high-way, and then take poſt and drive out of the kingdom, if he thought fit. That other phyſician, who made another hypochondriacal man take horſe, and ride out every morning three leagues from Paris, and there drink ſmall phials of river water carefully diſguiſed, and which he perſwaded him was a wonderfull medicine againſt his diſeaſe; did he not treat his patient as children are treated, who are not to be cured without deceiving them on the nature of the medicines given them?

Here every thing confirms me in my opinion. People of moderate appetites, who enjoy all things without being over-linked to any; and blockheads who have the happy gift of tiring every body without ever being uneaſy themſelves, are not ſubject to vapours. On the contrary witty people, and lively tempers, by an exceſſive indulgence of pleaſures of what kind ſoever, ſoon wear out their thinking faculty; and unleſs they have a taſte for ſome ſimple amuſements to fill up the vacant hours of their lives, they inſenſibly lapſe into an uneaſineſs that devours them. This is what in France is called vapours, and in England the ſpleen, a diſeaſe which makes ſo many of the Engliſh quit the iſland. It is obſervable even here, that neither the country labourers, nor the working tradeſmen are ſubject to it; and that it chooſes to dwell only in the boſom of idleneſs and opulence: which furniſhes us with the beſt idea of its real cauſe. And for this reaſon mr. LOCKE, in his treatiſe

on education, after enumerating the ſeveral qualifications of a young gentleman; looking on exerciſe conſidered purely in itſelf as neceſſary to health, ſays: *I would have him learn a trade, a manual trade.* The emperor CHARLES *the Great*, with great wiſdom, ordered the ſame method to be followed with regard to his children.

This diſeaſe, ſo indifferently known both to the patients and their phyſicians, is nothing but an inactivity of ſoul. And as medicines put the humours of the body in motion, ſo variety of occupations are ſpurs to the ſoul, which rouze it out of this lethargy. When the perſon has not ſufficient power over himſelf to uſe theſe ſpurs, aſſiſtance muſt be called in. In this languid ſtate, exterior force muſt ſupply the defect of our weakneſs, and make us act even againſt our will. The ſoul has its reſiſtance to changes, as well as the body; and this reſiſtance may be called *vis inertiæ*, as it is when it relates to matter. This is the predominant cauſe of vapours, and is the moſt difficult obſtacle to be ſurmounted in the cure. All men have a tendency to lazineſs, and the lazineſs of philoſophers is to do nothing but what they reliſh: and if their taſte happens to be cloy'd, they are in great danger of gradually falling into a total indolence.

Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE in his *obſervations upon the united provinces of the Netherlands* obſerves, that *ſtrangers among them are apt to complain of the ſpleen, but thoſe of the country ſeldom*

ſeldom or never. This, ſays he, *is a diſeaſe too refined for this country and people, who are well, when they are not ill; and pleaſed, when they are not troubled.** MONTAGNE has likewiſe ſhewn how much happier the condition of working men frequently is than that of the reſt of mankind. *The labourer*, ſays he, *is not ill, but when he is really ſo. When diſtempers fail us, knowledge furniſhes us with ſome of its own invention.* Vapours are more common in England than in other places; becauſe it is the country where there is the greateſt number of people who indulge uneaſineſs and anxiety, and give themſelves up earlieſt and with the moſt eagerneſs to all ſorts of exceſs.

Beſides the general cauſe of this diſeaſe, there are ſeveral particular cauſes. Contracting a ridiculous marriage, loſing conſiderable ſums at play, ruining ones ſelf by building, miſſing an employment; among us being diſgraced at court, but here ſeeing a miniſter proſper: are pretty frequently the cauſes of melancholic diſorders. All Paris have been witneſs to the folly of a certain man, from a very ſlender patrimony having made an immenſe fortune in the time of the Miſſiſſipi ſcheme, could not bear to be reduced in the end to an eſtate of fifty thouſand livres a year. It threw him into a jaundice, which laſted two years.* The man

* Temple's works, Vol. I. p. 54.

* The author of the life of Epictetus relates, that a man came one day in great diſtreſs, and threw himſelf at the feet of his

man the moſt ſubject to vapours that I ever knew, was never troubled with violent fits but when he wanted money. They encreaſed or diminiſhed according to his ſtock of caſh: ſo that his purſe was the infallible thermometer of his diſeaſe. The evening preceding the ſtrongeſt paroxyſm he ever felt, he had loſt two hundred louis at Pharo.

As vapours are commoner here than in France, it is alſo probable that they are of longer ſtanding. You know that they were not taken notice of among us till about the beginning of the laſt century. LE VASSOR in his hiſtory of LOUIS XIII. ſays, that as ſoon as the king thought himſelf attacked by them, ſome effeminate courtiers, and wits of the circle and bed-chamber brought them into vogue. What, diſtempers in vogue! Moſt certainly; and indeed to what extravagance does not the madneſs of affecting fine airs carry the greateſt part of mankind! However, the progreſs of this evil could not be very rapid at firſt. BOILEAU'S commentator, in his notes on the eighth ſatyr, aſſures us that when that piece was compoſed, there were no other vapours known but among the ladies, and that the men did not as yet dream of being ſeized with

his maſter Epaphroditus, who was captain of Nero's guards, moſt bitterly bewailing his ill fortune, which had reduced him to a hundred and fifty thouſand pieces for all wordly ſubſtance. To which Epaphroditus anſwered: *O miſerable man! how have you concealed, how have borne this ſo long?* Upton's Arrian, Vol. 1. p. 135.

with them: which is a proof, that they were not very common about the middle of that century. You ſee it is now ſo far otherwiſe, that there is ſcarcely any diſtemper more univerſal in Paris: people of all ranks and conditions are infected by them. From the courtier they have paſſed to the citizen, and from the wit to the bookſeller. Nay they begin to ſpread in the capital towns of our provinces, into which the intendants have imported them.

This diſeaſe is called the diſeaſe of ſenſible and witty people; and this is a ſufficient reaſon that I am not ſurprized at the progreſs it has made in an age when every body pretends to good ſenſe and wit: the caſe would be quite altered, if it was called the diſeaſe of diſordered minds. It is true at leaſt, that in England, as well as in France, perſons troubled with vapours, or who fancy themſelves ſo, are vain of being ſubject to them. They endeavour to make us regard them as a ſort of tribute they pay to nature for a gift, which ſhe beſtows on none but her favourites. A vapoured man, who would fain make me a convert to this doctrine, ſaid to me one day: "Sir, you "have no faith in vapours, becauſe you do "not comprehend them: HIPPOCRATES did "not comprehend them more than you, and "yet he believed them: for he ſays that there "is ſomewhat divine, θεοῦν τὶ, in that diſ-"eaſe." This imaginary ſick man had learnt thoſe two Greek words from a phyſician, who,

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in order to continue him in his madneſs, took pleaſure in flattering his ſelf-love. And he would willingly follow the example of the avaritious man, by engraving them in gold letters on his chimney-piece. For indeed how can one avoid being proud of a diſeaſe that has ſomewhat divine in it! But raillery a part, they pride in it at London as much as at Paris. Nay they go farther here; for they in a manner advertiſe it publickly. Had I no other token to know a vapoured man by, my ſmelling faculty alone would ſuffice. *Aſa fœtida* is regarded in England as a remedy againſt vapours; tho' perhaps it is no more than a ſign hung out. However that may be, thoſe here, who believe they labour under this evil, make great uſe of it: ſome take it pulverized inſtead of ſnuff, others wear bags of it on the pit of the ſtomach; as I have ſeen ſome ſimple credulous folks in France, wear little bags of remedies againſt the apoplexy. Whoever would aſpire to the honour of being thought vapoured, muſt accuſtom himſelf to this ſtench. I have obſerved, that the ladies bring themſelves to it more eaſily, and make greater uſe of it than the men.

Moſt vapoured people, like him, whom MOLIERE has painted in his *malade imaginaire*, are out of humour, when a perſon will not give credit to their complaints. I have ſeen one of them put himſelf in as great a paſſion, upon being told that he had the appearance of being in health, as if he had been told

told that he had the air of a villain. Unhappily thoſe who are thus affected, find but too many quack-doctors, whoſe intereſt it is to uphold them in their error; and who have leſs regard for real patients that die or recover, than for thoſe ſick in imagination, who live long, and are never cured. *They are ordered*, ſays MONTAGNE, *bleeding, purging, and other medicines for ills, which they feel only in their diſcourſe.* MOLIERE, who painted all his characters after nature, was ſometimes obliged to over-do them, in order to their making the deeper impreſſion on the audience: but this is not the caſe with his *malade imaginaire*; I am acquainted with ſome more ridiculous characters of that ſort.

But, as the author of that play does not attack true phyſicians, whoſe merit he acknowledges; neither do I pretend, I here repeat it, to point at ſome few real and involuntary hypochondriacs, whom I ſincerely pity; but at the greater number, who work themſelves up to this diſorder by the irregularity of their mind. I attack but the diſeaſes of the imagination, which it is in the power of reaſon to cure, if they would make trial of its remedies: and yet I pity more than condemn them. Whether it be, that bodily pain diſturbs the peace of the mind, or the troubles of the mind diſorder the conſtitution of the body; we ſuffer, and whatever be the cauſe, we are unhappy. What a fatal gift is the mind, when inſtead of tempering the bitters of life, it ſerves only

only to poiſon its ſweets! Equally weak in ſome reſpects, and blind in others, if on one hand we fear every thing as mortals, on the other we wiſh for all things as if we were immortal.

The caprice and immoderate deſires of men make them inceſſantly find thorns, where they ſhould gather roſes. By too much giving ourſelves up to pleaſures, we are making preparations for certain remorſe: and the leaſt riſque we run, is to become inſenſible; and from that inſtant we no longer live, we only languiſh. On the contrary, to be content with the ſtate we are placed in; to fulfill to our utmoſt the duties of ſociety; to enjoy pleaſures without running into exceſs; to arm ourſelves with prudence againſt misfortunes which may befall us; to comfort ourſelves, when we have not been able to prevent them; to have recourſe to exerciſe and other employments, in order to forget them: ſuch are the true means to prevent or cure vapours. If in this diſtemper the chief pains of the body are occaſioned purely by the affections of the mind; labouring at the cure of the mind, is ſtriking at the root of the evil. Man would be happy, if he knew the value of his reaſon: it is an univerſal remedy. I have nevertheleſs ſo good an opinion of human nature, to believe that reaſon will one time or other get the better of this diſeaſe; and that in ſome future age it will be treated as a mere ridicule, which faſhion had rendered contagious.

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In fine, there is a great difference between Engliſh and French vapours: for the fits are here more or leſs violent according to the winds. Autumn, and dark cloudy weather, are very dangerous for thoſe who have the imagination ever ſo little byaſs'd towards melancholy. A news-writer giving an account of ſeveral Engliſhmen who had killed themſelves, obſerved pleaſantly, that the thing was the more extraordinary, as the ſeaſon for ſuicide was not yet come. Whether weakneſs or courage, it is too true that uneaſineſs makes ſeveral of the Engliſh put themſelves to death. SENECA places it among the cauſes, which ſometimes render death deſirable. *Think*, ſays he, *how long you have been doing the ſame thing over*.* A gentleman of my acquaintance killed himſelf, to avoid the trouble of dreſſing and undreſſing every day. If ſo many of the Engliſh take ſuch fatal reſolutions, poſſibly the government may be partly in fault. This kind of ferocity is in eſteem with them: and liberty is allowed to dangerous writers to praiſe it as a national virtue. Thus prejudice confounds virtues and vices; and what can be no more than a proof of folly, is eſteemed a mark of courage. People whom we ſtile Barbarians, tho' wiſer in this reſpect at leaſt, ſuffer not the dead body of the perſon who has deſtroy'd

* Cogita quamdiu jam idem facias. Cibus, ſomnus, libido, per hunc circulum curritur. Mori velle non tantum et fortis aut miſer, ſed et faſtidioſus poteſt.

ſtroy'd himſelf, to be carried out thro' the door of the houſe: they make a breach in the wall, and bury it without any ceremony. If religion raiſes its voice in vain, policy ought to employ all its reſources to prevent ſuch attempts. Let us boaſt leſs of the politeneſs of our European manners: the ſavages are frequently our maſters in morality.

The importance of the ſubject has made me aſſume a more ſerious tone than I could have wiſhed: vapours require another, and I return to it. In general, great complaints are made here of the influence of the winds, and thoſe from the eaſtward are not at all reliſhed. If a perſon has viſits to make, he would do well to conſult the weather-cock, which governs many a head in this country: otherwiſe he is in danger of being ill received. This precaution is more neceſſary ſtill, if he is in expectation of any favours from the miniſtry or great men. One day a gentleman had a place to aſk, and the miniſter had been powerfully ſollicited in his favour. He ſet out from his houſe with the moſt favourable wind that could blow: but on his way the wind happened to change, and blew off all his hopes.

You, who love every thing from this country, will not perhaps be ſorry that I add to this letter a piece of waggery which has ſome relation to it, and is attributed to one of the greateſt wits in England.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

C A-

Catholicon aureum, baſilicum;

OR

THE ROYAL GOLDEN SPECIFIC.

" THIS remedy is ſo well known in all " the courts of Europe, and ſo " highly eſteemed by all the nobility and great " men of this kingdom, for its miraculous " virtues in all hypochondriacal and hyſterical " diſeaſes, that it is juſtly regarded as the u- " niverſal medicine. For it infallibly cures all " ſorts of ſpleen, vapours, melancholy, &c. " tho' ever ſo inveterate, and from whatever " cauſe the diſorder proceeds; whether from " ill health, indigeſtion, acrid and bilious hu- " mours, or from a gloomy melancholic diſ- " poſition of the mind; or in fine from miſ- " fortunes occaſioned either by unforeſeen ac- " cidents, or by play, luxury and extrava- " gance. In all thoſe caſes this wonderful " remedy procures certain and ſpeedy eaſe to " the patient, by rectifying the juices, purify- " ing the blood, and helping digeſtion; ſo " that a mind heretofore plunged into diſmal " thoughts, and tortured with continual fears " and frights, in a moment gives itſelf up to " quite contrary ideas, which renew the " whole animal œconomy, gladden the heart,

" warm the imagination, procure agreeable
" dreams, and keep up the courſe of the ani-
" mal ſpirits in a conſtant uniform degree of
" vivacity. In a word, it cures all perſons,
" as by a ſort of enchantment, of thoſe trou-
" bles of mind, which occaſion a gloomy
" melancholic way of thinking; and re-eſta-
" bliſhes them in a ſtate of ſerenity, good hu-
" mour and gaiety. It is very pleaſing to the
" palate, and may be taken without the know-
" ledge of the moſt intimate friend, or even
" of thoſe who partake of the ſame bed and
" board with the patient. Doctor ROBERT
" KING, who has obtained a patent for it,
" is the only perſon who diſpences it at his
" houſe in Piccadilly, over againſt Arlington-
" ſtreet; where he may be conſulted on thoſe
" diſorders every morning from eight o'clock
" to twelve, but at no other hours, unleſs it
" be upon very extraordinary caſes.

" N. B. ſuch as will apply to the doctor at
" the place above ſpecified, may receive more
" ample information concerning the virtues of
" this medicine, and the great number of
" cures it has performed; together with the
" names and directions of ſeveral perſons, who
" are ready to certify the truth thereof."

LETTER XXVIII.

To the Marquis DU T**.

On ſome inconveniencies of the political conſtitution of England.

NORTHAMPTON, &c.

MY LORD,

THO' I have already ſpent upwards of eight months in London, the ſmoak and fogs have not ſuffered me to ſee that town. I return to it on purpoſe to ſatisfy my curioſity; and I will beſides take the advantage of the fine ſeaſon to viſit all the adjacent places with care. This is the time for making ſuch a tour: the country is ſmiling, and the verdure is in full beauty.

You deſire me to apprize you of every thing relating to the manners of this nation, and you take pleaſure in combining them with their laws, and in judging from particular facts of the influence of the political government on the different orders of the people. An incident that has befallen me this day may poſſibly afford matter for your reflections.

I am in one of the beſt towns in England for good inns, and yet I am lodged in one of the worſt of the whole county; and that only becauſe I met upon the road with a peer of the realm, who was going to London as well as I, and deſired that we might make the reſt of the journey together: which I eaſily conſented to, without the leaſt ſuſpicion that I ſhould pay ſo dear for the honour of his lordſhip's company.

Here each party has its particular inns: and if a member of parliament is in the oppoſition to the court, he is under a neceſſity of going to an inn of his party, or he is a loſt man: for either they would believe he had turned coat, or they would turn it for him. In this country, the children in all conditions of life ſuck the ſpirit of party with their milk. They have ſcarcely learned to ſpeak, when they are taught the terms of *corruption* and *oppoſition*, by which they now denote the different parties, which were not long ſince characteriſed by the odious names of whig and tory.

My fellow traveller was much better off than I: for finding the wine bad, he had recourſe to the beer; and the fowl proving hard, he revenged himſelf on the pudding, which was ſoft enough. But I, who am not ſeaſoned to this groſs food, and drink little or no beer; I who am neither of the party of corruption nor oppoſition, neither whig nor tory, what buſineſs had I in this wretched houſe?

This

This is not all: I ſaw the moment when I thought that our inn-keeper's hatred to the miniſtry would give him a right to ſit down at table with us. We were obliged at leaſt to drink out of the ſame pot with him to his health, and to the healths of all thoſe of the town of Northampton, who were enemies to ſir ROBERT WALPOLE, (againſt whom I have not the leaſt ſubject of complaint) and friends to our land-lord, with whom you ſee I have no great reaſon to be in love. And what is ſtill worſe, I was under a neceſſity of liſtening to the reaſoning of this zealous partiſan of the *oppoſition*. My travelling companion had the politeneſs to entertain him during the whole ſupper time: for it was not the inn-keeper that made court to my lord, but my lord to the inn-keeper. This laſt exclaimed bitterly againſt the corruption of the miniſtry, and the remiſſneſs of the parliament. My lord uſed his utmoſt endeavours to excuſe the conduct of his party to our political inn-keeper, and to perſwade him that they conſtantly did all that was poſſible to be done in the preſent circumſtances. *No, my lord*, replied he in a paſſion, *they do not. If I was a member of parliament, as you are; all place-men ſhould be expelled, and the militia ſhould be broke, or, upon my honour, I would ſet fire to the four corners of the city of London.*

Thereupon he wiſhed us a good night, and departed in great wrath. As ſoon as he was gone: Sir, ſaid my fellow traveller, you muſt

not be ſurprized at all this. In this country we are obliged to manage all ſorts of people, in order to keep up our credit in the county. This fellow, notwithſtanding his appearance, is rich: and as rude and brutal as he is, he paſſes for an honeſt man, and is taken notice of; he is of greater importance here than you can well imagine: his vote at elections conſtantly guides thoſe of all his neighbours.

Moreover, it is not upon the road only, that thoſe gentlemen are expoſed to pay for their party zeal. At their country ſeats they daily ſuffer this ſort of tyranny. Thoſe who aſpire to become conſiderable, and will not make their court to the king, are under a neceſſity of making it the people. For example to a member of parliament, who is in the oppoſition, is obliged to buy all his proviſions from people of his party, let their goods be ever ſo bad: if any of his ſervants bought a ſingle pound of ſugar from a grocer who is on the miniſter's ſide, the maſter would be looked on as a falſe brother, and would loſe all his intereſt. This is a capital point, and the maſters muſt watch their ſervants very narrowly, to prevent their committing ſo heinous a crime. And yet from thence it happens, that your tradeſman takes the advantage of his excluſive privilege, and ſells you the worſt of goods, and always at the higheſt prizes.

I am acquainted with a perſon of fortune, who, in order to preſerve his credit in a neighbouring town, was for a long time forc'd to

ſuffer

ſuffer himſelf to be crippled by a ſhoemaker, who was a great buſtler at elections, but made very bad ſhoes for thoſe, to whom he ſold his vote. This ſhoemaker was an enemy to the court and of the high church; but of unſhakable fidelity to his party. The gentleman tired at length with being ſo wretchedly ſhod, was obliged, in order to keep him in tune, to have recourſe to an expedient: and that was, to continue to take ſhoes of him, which he gave to his footmen, and at the ſame time to order others to be made for his own wear by a ſhoemaker of the court party.

It is true, ſir, that theſe are things which do not happen among us; they are originals with which we are unacquainted. But thoſe inconveniencies are attended with eſſential advantages, of which we are deprived: however thus much is certain, that in France we ſhoe ourſelves to our fancy; and when on the road, we are at liberty to chooſe thoſe inns, where we meet with the beſt treatment.

I have the honour to be,

My lord,

Your lordſhip's moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XXIX.

To Monſieur DE LA CHAUSSÉE;

On foppery; and incloſing the copy of a letter from an Engliſh gentleman at Paris to my lord C * *, which gives a lively portraiture of French politeneſs.*

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

I Could wiſh, ſays mr. ADDISON in one of his papers, for the honour of the nation, that the parliament made an act, to prohibit the exportation of fools. As I have not the honour of my country leſs at heart, I am ſorry that ſuch a law has not been made among us: and I do not mean ſuch ſimpletons only, who want to buy the wind, in order to make a voyage, and who take cats for familiar devils.* There are many different ſorts of fools. But the moſt contemptible of all, and unhappily the moſt common among us, are thoſe whoſe aſſurance is equal to their folly. People here are much pleaſed with ſeeing a Frenchman of this character: the leſs he is eſteemed, the more he is ſought after: and they are rejoyced to find particular inſtances, to juſtify the contempt they

* Voyage des pays ſeptentrionaux, by Martiniere.

they have for the whole nation; and he who has ſtupidity enough to be flattered with this reception, does not ſee that it is equally diſhonourable to himſelf and inſulting to his country. It muſt be acknowledged, that our Petits-maitres are very extravagant. The author above-mentioned gives in another place the anatomy of one of theſe odd creatures: he pretends that the Petit-maitre is the only individual of our ſpecies, whoſe head is without brains. The Petit-maitre of our days has never been better painted, in my opinion, than in the *Fat puni*. I have read this ſmall play with great pleaſure, and have found it to be the true portrait of thoſe inſignificant men, equally envied by ſilly blockheads, and deſpiſed by ſenſible people, and who gain the good opinion of ſuch women only, as reſemble them. To this I annex a letter lately written to my lord C * * *, wherein they are not ſpared. The lecture will moſt certainly prove diſagreeable to them, and yet they ſtand in great want of it. 'Tis the ſame caſe with the beſt medicines; their bitterneſs muſt be borne, in favour of their ſalutary virtues. The cenſure, which you are going to read, has not perhaps leſs of juſtneſs than of ſharpneſs: and I aſk you, ſir, who are ſo well acquainted with our manners, if they have not wherewithal to ſcandalize an honeſt Engliſhman, who makes true politeneſs conſiſt in never giving offence; and who

ac-

acknowledges no other rule of behaviour in life, but that of fulfilling his duties.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

A LETTER *from an Engliſh gentleman at Paris, to my lord C * * * ; giving a lively portraiture of the foppery, impudence and debauchery, which conſtitute French politeneſs.*

MY LORD,

" I Know not what the French think of me, nor what you will ſay of them " or me preſently; but I own to your lord- " ſhip, that my reſidence at Paris begins to " be ſo tireſome, that I cannot ſtand it much " longer. The manners and way of think- " ing of this country are quite inſupportable. " I cannot accuſtom myſelf to wit, of which " good ſenſe is not the baſis; nor content " myſelf with amiable qualities, where the eſ- " ſential ones are wanting. Is this the bright " and polite nation, which we take for our " model at this day? May heaven preſerve " us, my lord, from ever reſembling them!

" In vain do I ſtudy at court that politeneſs, " which is ſo loudly boaſted of: the ſimpli- " city, or if you pleaſe, the bluntleſs of my " character will not comply. I ſhould be a " loſer by a change of manners. Tho' the " French cuſtoms creep on us, and that our " morals are every day more and more cor- " rupt; I ſtill think as our forefathers did: " it is better to retain imperfections, than to

" ex-

" exchange them for vices. That haughti-
" neſs and ſort of ferocity, of which we are
" accuſed, bring on fewer inconveniencies in
" the commerce of life, than knavery and
" falſeneſs of heart, which take up ſuch love-
" ly outſides in this country. Your French
" politeneſs is but a falſe modeſty, a diſguiſed
" pride, in a word, but a troubleſome maſk,
" which mankind put on with the ſole in-
" tention of deceiving each other. If it does
" not become an honeſt man to impoſe, it
" becomes not a rational man to ſuffer him-
" ſelf to be impoſed on.

" In France, the courtier, whoſe meanneſs
" even ſurpaſſes his politeneſs, waiting on a
" perſon in a great employment, ſeems to be
" ignorant of what he owes to himſelf: with
" every body elſe, he is ſo full of himſelf, that
" one would be apt to think, that the man ex-
" iſts not, to whom he has any obligations.
" The care he takes to prevent your ſeeing a
" certain ſuperiority, which he aſcribes to him-
" ſelf without any real title to it, is preciſely
" what he calls politeneſs. And you would
" have me be obliged to him for what is but
" the effect of the moſt preſumptuous pride.

" This is the country of wit, with all my
" heart: all Frenchmen have wit, I am wil-
" ling to believe it: and ſure it muſt be ſo,
" ſince they have perſwaded other nations of
" it. If any thing ever reſembled the epide-
" mic diſeaſe of the people of Abdera, it is
" the wit which the French have at preſent.

" Men,

" Men, women, every body here value themſelves on it: their books are nothing but wit, their converſation nothing elſe; and in this reſpect as in all others, 'tis the court that ſets the example. But how extraordinary this example appears to me, and how diſguſting it is to Engliſh good ſenſe! And indeed even among the French, it is not the reaſonable people that ſet it. What diſtinguiſhes this country from others, is not perhaps, that it contains more or leſs ſenſible people, but that, whatever the number be, they are reckoned as nothing. The women, who give out the faſhions, receive them from young fellows, the greateſt part of whom are of ſuch groſs ignorance as ought to make men bluſh, who have the happineſs to be born ſuperior to others. Wit, which has not been cultivated, ſeldom produces any thing but impertinence and ridicules.

" I know not what is become of that gallantry which formerly reigned among the French: it ſeems to have gone off with the taſte of CYRUS and the CLELIA's. That of the preſent time is in the ſtrain of their modern romances; it is that of libertiniſm, which does not even take the pains to diſguiſe itſelf. Among this light inconſtant people, their very morals are ſubject to the caprice of the mode. It is now a long time ſince it has been quite unfaſhionable in any body above a cit to love his wife. The rules of the polite air are become more ſevere ſtill: they do not even allow a man

" to

" to love his miſtreſs. A fine gentleman
" would think he had loſt all his reputation,
" if he was ſuſpected of ſo great a weakneſs.
" And ſome there are, who carry the ſcruple
" ſo far, that they make their valets de cham-
" bre write their love-letters, for fear of giv-
" ing occaſion to obloquy. It would be a ſe-
" vere ſtroke to a courtier, that a woman of
" the Marais * could produce one of his let-
" ters. They have baniſhed all courtſhip and
" complaiſance, as old-faſhion'd cuſtoms: in
" a word, 'tis love itſelf that appears ridicu-
" lous to them; and in the preſent language
" the word love no longer conveys the idea
" of a paſſion, its literal ſignification is an
" intrigue.

" Formerly it was a piece of gallantry to
" wear the livery of the beauty, to whom a
" perſon addreſſed his homage: and it could
" be done without any reflection on her ho-
" nour; becauſe in reality he declared him-
" ſelf her ſlave. At this day, by an indiſcre-
" tion in which both ſexes have an equal ſhare,
" ſeveral Petits-maitres point out the woman
" who honours them with her favours, by the
" ſort of powder which they uſe: and there
" are people who pretend to trail the new
" intrigues of thoſe gentlemen by the ſcent of
" their perfumes. This woman, they ſay, is
" known to love cyprus powder, that other
" cannot endure any but the powder *à la*
" *Ma-*

* A trading part of Paris.

" *Marechale:* and a third gives the preference " to amber-greeſe. Thus a ſprightly Petit-" maitre, by daily changing his perfumes, " publiſhes at the ſame time the inconſtancy " of his taſte, and the rapidity of his con-" queſts.

" Thoſe places become ſo much in faſhion " by the name of little private lodges, and " which one would be apt to think were in-" tended for ſecrecy, are on the contrary de-" ſtined to make the diſhonour of women " public. They are frequently kept for va-" nity rather than neceſſity. Some degree of " conſtraint is perhaps neceſſary in love: at " leaſt, exceſs of freedom makes it degenerate " into libertiniſm; and this is the effect of " theſe private lodges. A woman cannot come " there, without making a declaration of her " own accord, which ought always to be ex-" torted from her. And indeed to how ma-" ny other indiſcretions is ſhe not expoſed " by the Petit-maitre, who prevails on her to " come thither? If he admits a ſinger to his " table, it is not ſo much to divert the lady " with the charms of his voice, as to have a " witneſs who may divulge his happineſs to " the world.

" The French upbraid us with not being " fond enough of women, becauſe we live " leſs familiarly with them than they: but " perhaps their manner of living with them " is not a proof of greater fondneſs for the ſex. " In England a woman would not think her-

" ſelf

" ſelf beloved, if ſhe was not reſpected: " the Frenchwomen do not ſeem ſo ſcrupu- " lous. How have they been able to accu- " ſtom themſelves to the vain-glorious airs of " court-coxcombs, who would bluſh to pur- " chaſe their defeat, and who only ſeek to " triumph over them, in order to ſooth their " own vanity, and to diſhonour the altar on " which they have offered ſacrifice?

" True it is, that there are certain complai- " ſant mortals in another ſtate of life, who " ſubmit to be tied like ſlaves to the lady's " car, and whom ſhe makes pay for the ob- " ject of the courtier's diſdain by great ſub- " miſſions and reſpects. The leavings of a " duke are always very coſtly to a man of the " long robe.

" The title of a lucky man is all that tempts " the Petits-maitres of theſe days, and all they " ſeek. And frequently the bare reputation " of it ſuffices. The ſhadow ſerves them in- " ſtead of the reality. They are happy in their " own minds, if they can but appear ſo; and " in order to ſucceed, they ſometimes act ve- " ry ridiculous farces.

" One of them orders his horſes to be put " to, for a ſham myſterious aſſignation; and " an hour afterwards ſneaks home on foot, " and enters by the back door, goes up the " back ſtairs to his apartment, and quietly " eats a chicken in a private manner; while " his equipage ſcandalizes the whole neigh- " bourhood, at the end of a ſtreet where ſome

" cele-

" celebrated beauty dwells. Another goes to
" ſup alone at his little lodge, and has ſky-roc-
" kets play'd off, to give notice to his neigh-
" bours of a happineſs which he enjoys not.

" One of thoſe ſparks has very ingenuouſly
" owned to me, that he is indebted to ſuch
" artifices for the firſt riſe of his reputation ;
" and that afterwards this reputation, ſo craf-
" tily eſtabliſhed, obtained him the conqueſt
" of ſeveral women. That he did not ſtop,
" like thoſe abovementioned, at the ſhadow
" of happineſs : it was a meditated philoſo-
" phical ſyſtem of gallantry, which he had
" built upon a great knowledge of the tem-
" pers of women and of his nation. He
" knew that in this country a perſon is what-
" ever he has a mind to be. If he would be
" thought a wit, 'tis but ſaying he is ; to paſs
" for a man of taſte, it ſuffices to talk of
" things of taſte ; and a proper ſtock of fop-
" pery and impudence ſets him up for a lucky
" man. This ſpark having had the addreſs
" to perſwade the public that he had this or
" that lady, who did not ſo much as know
" him, has thereby had ſeveral others, which
" otherwiſe would never have known him.
" The whole art conſiſts in gaining two
" or three of the moſt celebrated : the reſt
" fall of themſelves. They find their ſelf-
" love concerned. According to the rules
" of modern gallantry, whatever merit a wo-
" man has, ſhe will rather make the firſt ad-
" vances, than fail of binding to her car, for

" a

" a week at leaſt, the perſon whom the reſt " of the ſex have cryed up. The men have " juſt the ſame notions: it matters not whe- " ther a woman be handſome or ugly; if my " lord duke has had her, this is a ſufficient " motive for all the young fellows, who are " ſtarting into the world, to follow her. This " is preciſely the manner in which things paſs " here, and the ſtrain in which the fine gentle- " men talk. They generally live with the ſex " without any tie; or, which is ſtill worſe, " they are tied to them without any eſteem.

" At this day the Frenchwomen think that " it concerns their honour to be gallant: and " of this they are ſo fully convinced, that they " are willing to appear ſo, even when they " are otherwiſe inclined: for ſome there are, " to whom I muſt render this juſtice, and " who have lovers purely for the intereſt of " their beauty. The care of their reputation " obliged them formerly to keep their intri- " gues ſecret; the ſame motive lays them un- " der a neceſſity at preſent to make them " public. And for this reaſon it is, that in " public walks and diverſions they affect to be " ſeen with the man, who vouchſafes to e- " ſteem himſelf honoured by their favours. " 'Tis the men that begin to ſhew ſome ſigns " of delicacy in this point.

" The French ladies have ſet themſelves ſo " far above all prejudices, that they ſcruple " not to keep company with the greateſt li- " bertine, provided he can contrive to throw

" the veil of talents over his libertiniſm : thoſe
" women who profeſs a way of life, which
" frees them from the yoke of decency, have
" entrance every where on the ſame conditi-
" on. Some of the ſex aſſume an authority
" from the preſence of theſe creatures, to
" compleat the work of demoliſhing all the
" barriers of modeſty ; others tho' really vir-
" tuous, yet drawn in by example, regard
" certain amuſements innocent, of which they
" do not ſee the danger ; which nevertheleſs
" ſuppoſe a general depravity of morals. The
" gallant ladies of this country lay claim to
" philoſophy; and it muſt be allowed that they
" carry it a great way : but unhappily as they
" lead the reſt of the ſex, they have at length
" prevailed to bring their licentiouſneſs in fa-
" ſhion, as well as their dreſs. Now, what
" has been the conſequence in France of this
" free commerce of the two ſexes ? An ex-
" change of their vices, which equally diſho-
" nours them both. The men have at pre-
" ſent all the effeminacy of women, and the
" women have taken up the impudence of
" men.

" Such are, my lord, the ſweet and polite,
" but perhaps leſs ſo than corrupt, manners,
" which you regret in England. I ſhould be
" very ſorry to have brought my wife hither,
" as your lordſhip adviſed me to do. Not-
" withſtanding the high opinion I have of her
" virtue and character, the ſex is frail, and bad
" example is always contagious. I intend to

" be

" be in London next month; and I return
" with joy to a country, where politeneſs and
" faſhionable precedents do not oblige a man
" to quit a woman, who frequently has no o-
" ther defect but that of being entirely his
" own; in order to live with another, who
" poſſibly has no other merit but that of hav-
" ing belonged to every body.

" I am, my lord,

" Your lordſhip's moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XXX.

To the Abbé SALLIER,

Keeper of the king's library, member of the French Academy, and of that of Inſcriptions and Belles-lettres;

Containing a new method of inveſtigating the great queſtion on the comparative magnitude of London and Paris.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

IT is daily diſputed at London and Paris, which of the two cities is the moſt populous.* I have read an Engliſh comedy, the ſubject of which is the examination of this important queſtion. There is a hiſtory of Lon-

* Sir William Petty, in his political arithmetick, pretends that London is bigger than Paris and Rouen put together. The number of the inhabitants is generally computed at abo million. The city of London pays the ſeventh part at leaut a the expences of the government.

don actually in the preſs, which is to make ſeveral volumes in folio, and will poſſibly clear it up: I ſend you the firſt ſheets, which are juſt come out. The warmth with which both parties diſpute this frivolous advantage, has ſomething in it ridiculous enough to the eyes of a philoſopher; as if a man were really more or leſs valuable for being born in a greater or leſſer town. But men are generally ſo little of themſelves, that, in order to be of ſome conſequence, they call in the help of every thing around them. SALMASIUS born in Burgundy in the village, from which he took his name, was ſcarcely known, when he pretended to be of Semur: * but when he became famous, he abſolutely inſiſted on being of the capital city of the province. In ſeveral reſpects, ſome learned men are quite as little as the reſt of mankind. Such weakneſſes cannot affect thoſe who have your philoſophical turn of mind: you know that good ſenſe and folly are of all countries. Human ſociety is but a mixture of virtues and vices. There is no country, which would not deem it an honour to adopt you; and as I am not indifferent to that of my native province, I congratulate it, upon your having there ſuck'd with your milk that taſte for learning, which has ſince given you ſo diſtinguiſhed a rank in the republic of letters.

London diſdains not to be the rival of Paris: but *the metropolis of the Britiſh empire* (thus it is ſtiled by ſeveral authors) pretends to have the

* A ſmall town in Burgundy.

the ſuperiority over *the firſt city of France* by the number of its inhabitants : and as far as I can judge, its pretenſions are well grounded. I will not alledge in proof, that they reckon a hundred and thirty-three pariſhes in it, and that there are but fifty-ſeven in Paris. Nor do I ſtop at the totals of the yearly bills of births and burials in both cities: the difference obſerved therein may poſſibly proceed from the great number of ſea-faring people on the Thames, the greateſt part of whom ought rather to be regarded as paſſengers than inhabitants. The foundation, on which I build, is quite of a different kind; it is, that the corruption of morals, eſpecially among the common people, is carried much farther in London than in Paris. It is a ſad, but true, obſervation, that libertiniſm, debauches and all ſorts of vice are the inheritance of great cities, and that the more populous they are, the more corrupt: upon examining this propoſition inverted, perhaps it will be found, that the more corrupt they are, the more populous they muſt be.

However, it muſt be allow'd that another cauſe contributes to this great depravity of morals; which is the extreme licentiouſneſs that reigns here, perhaps as a neceſſary conſequence of the political conſtitution. In France we have a police, the regularity of which deſcends to the loweſt particulars that can be of uſe to the community; and of which an immenſe people feel the happy effects without know-

knowing all its value, but which even ſtrangers are forced to admire. At London, there is neither police, order nor ſubordination. The common people here are ſeldom reſtrained by the laws, the great are not always by decency: in a word the profeſſion of vice is as public as any reputable profeſſion.

About twelve years ago, ſome well-intentioned perſons here formed themſelves into a ſociety of a ſingular kind; their view was the reformation of manners of this great city. They obliged themſelves to proſecute at their own expence all ſuch as offend againſt the laws divine or human: and for that purpoſe they had hireling ſpies in every part of the town, to inform againſt the offenders. Unluckily one of this ſociety committed a murther ſoon after, and thus it fell almoſt into contempt in its infancy. However, there are ſtill ſome worthy ſouls, who uſe their utmoſt endeavours to reeſtabliſh its credit. The chief occupation of this ſociety at preſent is to publiſh works of piety and morality, to ſerve as an antidote to infidelity and licentiouſneſs. Thoſe works are ſometimes ſacred tragedies, nay ſometimes romances compoſed on purpoſe to inſpire a taſte for virtue, and horror for vice. It were to be wiſhed that they employed perſons to write thoſe works, whoſe talents were equal to their good intentions: but the greateſt part of thoſe which I have read, are commendable only for their deſign. Yet I except one romance, which is *Pamela*, wherein, notwithſtanding great tediouſneſs,

ouſneſs, and a fund of low education, which may poſſibly diſguſt moſt part of the readers, I have found very good things.

I will remark on this occaſion, that there is not a city in the world, where more benefactions are made to hoſpitals, and where theſe charities are worſe diſpenſed. *The number of hoſpitals*, ſays anEngliſh author, *encreaſes daily, without diminiſhing the number of our poor.* The beſt foundations, and yet the moſt neglected, are in England. The general cry of the nation has not yet prevailed on the parliament to redreſs thoſe abuſes. Six pence per month are ſtopped out of every ſailor's pay, towards the ſupport of Greenwich hoſpital, which is an eſtabliſhment for Engliſh ſailors of the ſame nature with the *Invalids* for our ſoldiers: yet I am informed that many of thoſe who live in it, have no ſort of right to admittance. Avarice makes ſome maſters provide for old ſervants, whom vanity was frequently the ſole motive for keeping, at the expence of the public: in order to ſave themſelves the allowance of penſions, they ſend them to thoſe eſtabliſhments, which belong only to thoſe honeſt ſubjects, who have ſpent their youth and health in the ſervice of their country. Is it poſſible, that the greateſt abuſes are found among thoſe, who paſs for the wiſeſt people in Europe; and that where they talk ſo loud of zeal for the public good, thoſe whoſe duty it is to watch the general intereſt, conſtantly ſacrifice it to their private advantage!

In England, the ſtate loſes a vaſt number of ſubjects for want of having at London ſo neceſſary and well-regulated an eſtabliſhment as our hoſpital for foundlings. You may eaſily remember, that this was confeſſed to us one day at Paris by that illuſtrious and virtuous Engliſhman *, who is now preſident of the Royal Society; and who to a warm zeal for the public good joining the moſt extenſive lights in every branch of knowledge, deſerves to be placed at the head of the managers of all the charities in this city. In England every pariſh is oblig'd to take care of the children born therein; and there are ſufficient funds ſettled for their maintenance and education: and yet, to the great ſhame of the managers, the moſt part of thoſe unhappy little ones die within the firſt or ſecond year. Fifty foundlings hardly furniſh one man to the ſtate. This is a matter of ſuch moment, that it equally concerns humanity and policy. How is it poſſible that the Engliſh ſhould be guilty of ſo much negligence; ſince humanity is ſaid to be their firſt virtue, and that they are ſuch maſters of political calculations, that they know the preciſe value of the life of every perſon in the nation!

To return to the Society for reformation of manners, their laudable deſign puts me in mind of a pamphlet, which I have read, and poſſibly you will not be ſorry to ſee. I am entirely of the opinion of the ingenious author *,

* Martin Folkes, eſq;

author *, and ſincerely wiſh that in all countries there were no other taxes laid but on the vices of mankind.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

An infallible ſcheme to pay the public debt of this nation (Ireland) *in ſix months.*

" THe great diſtreſs of this unhappy " country, is too viſible to all, ex-
" cept thoſe who have power to redreſs it.
" We may obſerve thro' the whole nation,
" one univerſal complaint of the decay of
" trade, the oppreſſion of landlords, and the
" deficiency of money; and yet I cannot
" find among all the ſchemes propoſed to
" leſſen theſe evils, any one in particular,
" which ſeems likely to ſucceed.

" But

* Dean Swift. He is one of the Engliſh authors, who has beſt ſucceeded in pleaſantry: but even in this kind of writing he is not always happy. Who can reliſh his *modeſt propoſal for preventing the children of the poor people in Ireland, from being a burden to their parents or country; and for making them beneficial to the public?* The method he propoſes, is to fatten them, and then ſell them at a public market, for the food of wealthy folks, nice palates, &c. On this head he enters into a wretched detail, equally ridiculous and diſguſting. 'Tis eaſy to perceive, that the whole is a violent ſatyr againſt the Engliſh government, for oppreſſing Ireland: but we often miſs our aim, for want of addreſs. The author intended to make people laugh, and he ſurfeits. A ſatyr that would bear reading over a ſecond or third time with pleaſure, would certainly have a better effect, than a writing, the inſipidity of which makes it drop out of the reader's hands.

" But what is ſtill an addition to this melan-
" choly proſpect of affairs, is the unbounded
" luxury and extravagance, both in apparel
" and entertainments, which perſons of all
" ranks and degrees run into at preſent; tho'
" in general we labour under ſuch hardſhips
" and poverty.

" We are affected in a quite different man-
" ner from all the nations upon earth: for,
" with others, wealth is the mother of luxu-
" ry, but with us poverty has the very ſame
" effect; with others, ſcarcity is the parent
" of induſtry, but with us it is the nurſe of
" idleneſs and vice.

" We labour to imitate our neighbouring
" kingdoms in nothing but their extrava-
" gance, without having the ſame plentiful
" aids of commerce, or applying ourſelves to
" the ſtudy of fair-dealing to maintain it. So
" that, in ſhort, by our own ill management,
" we are brought to ſo low an ebb of wealth
" and credit, that our condition ſeems inca-
" pable of any relief.

" But, as I have the intereſt of this miſ-
" guided people very much at heart, I do not
" intend this eſſay as a detection of their pre-
" ſent grievances, but as a remedy againſt
" them. And for that purpoſe, I have la-
" boured to find out ſuch a ſcheme as will
" diſcharge our public debt, with all poſſible
" eaſe and pleaſure to the ſubject, and in ſo
" ſhort a time, that we may neither com-
" plain of being oppreſſed by long-continu'd

" taxes,

" taxes, (as ſome unreaſonable people often " preſume to do,) nor quite deſpair of being " once more in a thriving condition.

" Let us conſider what thoſe vices are, " which at preſent prevail moſt among us; " and I believe, upon enquiry, they will be " found Perjury, Fornication, Drunkenneſs, " Swearing, Slander, Infidelity, Fraud, Blaſ- " phemy, and many others: would it not " then be worthy of our conſideration, whe- " ther a moderate tax upon every particular " vice, inſtead of laying an additional duty " upon wine, hops, and other commodities, " would not ſupply us with a ſufficient ſum " in a very ſhort time? Such a tax muſt of " neceſſity yield a vaſt revenue, and prove " the moſt infallible, and indeed the only " ſcheme for our proſperity, if it ſhall be " thought proper to be continued.

" But, before I proceed to particulars, it " may not be amiſs to premiſe, that this tax " is not deſigned for any one county or pro- " vince in this kingdom, but to extend itſelf " univerſally over the whole nation: becauſe " different vices may flouriſh in different " counties, as different plants in their diffe- " rent ſoils; as perjury in one, theft in ano- " ther, diſſimulation and flattery in another, " rapine in another, and ſo of the reſt: howe- " ver, I take theft to be our peculiar ſtaple vice.

" And leſt any diſputes may hereafter a- " riſe, about the nature of perjury, the inten- " tion of the act in this particular, or what

" perſons

" perſons are to be ſubject to this tax; I muſt
" here alſo premiſe, that every lye confirm'd
" by an oath, is undoubtedly perjury, whe-
" ther before a magiſtrate, or behind a coun-
" ter. And therefore we do not doubt, but
" the trading part of our people will be
" great benefactors to the public in this par-
" ticular article, as well as in many others.

" Theſe two things being premis'd, let
" us ſuppoſe that in this large country 5000
" perſons are guilty of this infirmity each
" day: which computation muſt be allow'd
" very moderate, if we recollect, that this
" number is not above a four hundredth
" part of the inhabitants of this kingdom,
" who are generally computed to amount to
" two millions. And if we further conſider,
" what ſtrong inducements our natives have
" to practice it, from its being often ſo ex-
" ceedingly beneficial; if we conſider the
" great uſe made of it in all ſorts of traffick;
" the great demands for it in law-ſuits; the
" great advantage of it in elections, and the
" undeniable profit of it in all proſecutions,
" we ſhall think the number of 5000 ſtill
" more reaſonable.

" Let us then ſuppoſe every one of this
" number to be perjur'd, only once every
" day, (which is a very favourable ſuppoſi-
" tion) and ſubject only to a tax of ſix-pence
" for each offence: for which ſum, perhaps,
" he may procure either the death of an e-
" nemy, an eſtate for his friend, or a for-

" tune

" tune for himſelf (all which are eſteemed
" very deſirable): the tax will be too incon-
" ſiderable to make any one murmur, and
" yet will yield the ſum of 125 l. per day,
" towards diſcharging our national debt.

" Beſides, this tax, tho' very low, may in
" reality be very profitable to mankind: for
" attornies, ſollicitors, uſurers, butchers, and
" other honeſt traders, will ſcarce think it
" anſwerable to the expence of time, to for-
" ſwear themſelves for any profit from one
" penny to ſix pence, incluſive, (as now
" cuſtomary,) but will at leaſt, for every
" tranſgreſſion, expect to gain ſufficient to
" defray the tax.

" However, I wou'd have all ſworn con-
" ſtables, and all collectors of this and many
" other taxes, entirely exempted from any
" penalty, as priviledg'd perſons: becauſe,
" by that means they will be enabled to be
" very ſerviceable in their ſeveral ſtations.

" Fornication, as the world is at preſent,
" wou'd furniſh the public with a large ſum,
" even at a very moderate tax: for it is now
" made an eſſential part of the polite gentle-
" man's character, and he that has prevail'd
" on the greateſt number, proportionably riſes
" in reputation.

" Let us then compute, that in the ſe-
" veral parts of this nation, 5000 per day
" were liable to be taxed for this general vice,
" only at two ſhillings: the ſum ariſing from
" this to the public good, will amount to

" 500 l.

" 500 l. per day, and in ſix months to al-
" moſt one third of our national debt.

" I know it may be here objected, that
" I have computed upon too ſmall a num-
" ber, and that I might juſtly account rather
" upon twenty or thirty thouſand per day,
" in the ſeveral counties of this kingdom:
" but, tho' I own this objection to be very
" ſtrong, if we were to conſider the oppor-
" tunities of wakes, patron-days, hay-making
" ſeaſons, may-days, religious pilgrimages to
" holy wells, balls public and private, and
" many other commodious ſcenes for that
" kind of entertainment; yet I would rather
" chuſe to err on the right ſide, in too
" ſmall, than too great a computation.

" I know the popiſh clergy will make
" ſtrong remonſtrances againſt this tax, and
" plead, that it is deſign'd to oppreſs them;
" that all nations of the earth allow them a
" toleration in this particular point, as they
" are frail mortals, and ſworn to celibacy;
" and what is ſtill worſe, that ſuch a tax
" would be the moſt effectual means to drain
" them of their whole revenues: but as I
" would not have ſuch pious perſons juſtly
" complain of the leaſt rigour, I ſhall rea-
" dily agree to their being exempted.

" Drunkenneſs I would only tax at ſix-
" pence, becauſe it might be prejudicial to
" his majeſty's revenue to diſcourage it, and
" conſequently ſubject the propoſer to pe-
" nalties.

" Let

" Let us then compute, that only twenty " thouſand perſons, (which is but one hun- " dredth part of the people in this king- " dom) were daily liable to be tax'd; the " amount would be 500 l. per day. And " how extreamly moderate this computa- " tion is, may appear to any one who con- " ſiders, that beſides the uſual opportunities " of taverns and private houſes, there are elec- " tions, fairs, mayors feaſts, univerſity treats, " corporation dinners, chriſtmas regales, wed- " dings and chriſt'nings, both in town and " country, and many other irreſiſtable in- " ducements to this manly vice, which would, " perhaps, if nicely calculated, daily furniſh us " with two thirds more than our computed " number, and by that means greatly conduce " to the public good.

" But, however, I would by all means ex- " empt all country juſtices of the peace, " whether ſquires or parſons: becauſe it would " be unſeemly to ſee ſuch honourable and " reverend perſonages inſulted by meaner of- " ficers, as often as they might be diſcovered " in ſuch a condition.

" Swearing would be a moſt univerſal bene- " fit in this caſe: becauſe at preſent, it ſerves " to ſeaſon the diſcourſe of all ranks and de- " grees of men. It is the principal ingredient " and decoration of all modern jokes, gibes, " quarrels, love-ſpeeches, diſputes, threats " and promiſes, and conſequently capable of " affording an incredible revenue.

" How-

" However, let us ſuppoſe forty thouſand per-
" ſons per day, liable to the tax of ſix-pence
" only, for each offence of this kind; which,
" conſidering the great number of markets,
" coffee-houſes, ſhambles, barracks and ga-
" ming-houſes, in this kingdom, is a very in-
" conſiderable number: yet even this article
" will furniſh us with 1000 l. per day, which
" would amount to near two thirds of the pub-
" lick debt.

" Our laws have amerſed each offence in
" this way at one ſhilling, ordering one half
" to the informer, and the other to the poor;
" which in my humble opinion, was very ill
" concerted: for if the legiſlature did really
" intend that this law ſhould be punctually en-
" forc'd, they ought to have divided the whole
" mulct between the informer and the juſtice,
" without any regard to the poor; and then,
" they might be aſſured, it would be vigo-
" rouſly executed.

" I am already apprehenſive, that all mili-
" tary perſons will expect an exemption from
" taxes on this account: becauſe they may
" plead precedent for many generations, may
" alledge the power of cuſtom, the decency and
" comelineſs of it, when properly mingled with
" other diſcourſe, or that the cenſorious world
" would perhaps ſuſpect, they knew nothing
" of God at all, if they did not ſometimes men-
" tion his name; and many other reaſons of
" equal weight: but tho' theſe remonſtrances
" are very juſt, yet as this is the only means

" by

" by which our ſtanding army can poſſibly
" conduce to the national good, it will be
" hard to exempt them.

" However, as the military power would
" infallibly be liable to this tax in all its bran-
" ches, by which means they might be utter-
" ly impoveriſh'd; I believe it may not be
" improper to allow all foot-ſoldiers and field-
" officers, all young enſigns, ſpruce cornets,
" naval captains, cabin-boys and quarter-ma-
" ſters, forty or fifty oaths a day entirely free
" from any tax or penalty.

" As for ſlander, ſuppoſing only twenty
" thouſand per day, taxed at ſix pence for every
" offence, this article would daily afford the
" public (at the loweſt reaſonable compu-
" tation) 500 l.

" And as this is a favourite talent, we
" might have ventur'd to tax it much high-
" er; but I would not ſeem to diſcourage ſo
" charitable a diſpoſition, eſpecially where it
" may promote the intereſt of my country.

" As to the ladies, I have been always too
" great an admirer of theirs, to deſire any re-
" ſtriction ſhould be laid on their pleaſure,
" either private or public; and therefore I
" would have them tax'd only half as much
" as the men for every little error of this kind
" becauſe ſlander, in men, is a talent unnatural
" and acquired, and generally practic'd to in-
" gratiate themſelves with the oppoſite ſex;
" whereas this genteel failing in females is in-
" nate, and impoſſible to be reſtrain'd; which

" is a caſe that demands our utmoſt compaſ-
" ſion.

" I think all drawing-rooms, aſſemblies,
" and all places of public reſort for ladies,
" ought to be exempt from any penalty: be-
" cauſe it is ſo material a part of the diſcourſe
" and amuſement of thoſe places, that to tax
" them for each offence, would be in effect,
" to enjoin them perpetual ſilence; which, if
" it were poſſible, would be too great a miſ-
" fortune, both to themſelves, and the world,
" to be exacted from them.

" Infidelity and blaſphemy would furniſh
" us with a conſiderable ſum; and as they are
" not originally of our own growth, but an-
" nually imported from neighbouring king-
" doms, they ought to be ſubject to ſome
" duty, which in few years would probably
" be a vaſt addition to the public revenue.
" Yet as this traffick is principally carried
" on by young lawyers, and travelling ſquires,
" any attempt to tax it would certainly meet
" with too vigorous an oppoſition. But on
" condition it might paſs into a law, I would
" gladly exempt both lawyers of all ages,
" ſubaltern and field-officers, young heirs,
" dancing-maſters, pick-pockets, and players.

" Let us now only conſider the ſeveral ſums
" ariſing from the tax on our vices, as we
" have before computed them, and the juſt-
" neſs and infallibility of this ſcheme muſt
" appear demonſtrably.

The

The public debt of this nation is about	300,000 l.

And the tax

For perjury	125	l. per day.
Fornication	500	
Drunkenneſs	500	
Swearing	1000	
Slander	500	
Total per day	2625	

" Which in 182 days, or half a year, will " amount to 477,750 l. which is conſidera- " bly more than our national debt.

" But leſt by the univerſal poverty of our " people, which is much to be fear'd, or by " their growing more virtuous, which never " can be reaſonably apprehended, this daily " income ſhould fall ſhort of what we have " computed; I muſt humbly beg leave to " offer ſome other improvements of this " ſcheme, which will undoubtedly anſwer all " deficiencies.

" And for this purpoſe, what if a ſevere " tax was laid on all manner of perſons who " preſum'd to marry till they were full forty " years old. If any ſhould prove fool-hardy " enough to tranſgreſs a law ſo calculated for " the happineſs of men, each offence would " be of ſignal benefit to the public: and if " providentially it ſhould prove an effectual " reſtraint, there muſt of neceſſity be fewer

" children in each family, and of conſequence
" the number of beggars and wretches in this
" kingdom, muſt proportionably decreaſe.

" And what wou'd ſtill be more material,
" perhaps in one age, if this beneficial act
" ſhould be continued, the greateſt part of
" this country would require to be new peo-
" pled from England; a circumſtance greatly
" to be wiſh'd: becauſe ſuch an accident
" wou'd probably cure that nation of its in-
" veterate antipathy to the inhabitants of this,
" at leaſt for ſome generations.

" As for the ſcheme to tax batchelors,
" which has lately been propos'd to the houſe
" by one of its honourable members, I muſt
" beg leave to think it highly improper: be-
" cauſe batchelors of all ranks and degrees,
" are real benefactors to the public, by not
" furniſhing it either with beggars, or oppreſ-
" ſors of beggars, one of which muſt infallibly
" be the conſequence of marriage in this
" country.

" I would alſo earneſtly requeſt, that all
" young clergymen, who, with more paſſion
" than prudence, ſhall dare to marry before
" they are beneficed, may be liable to a moſt
" ſevere tax, equal to a prohibition: becauſe
" ſuch offenders muſt inevitably multiply beg-
" gars, live in contempt, and die in poverty.

" Theſe and many other expedients,
" might eaſily be found upon any emergency
" to furniſh conſiderable ſums for the natio-
" nal debt.

" But

" But as there will remain about 177,750 " l. over and above our public debt, I will " allow one hundred thouſand pounds of it " for ſallaries, to ſuch perſons as ſhall be ap- " pointed collectors; and I hope this will be " a reaſonable proviſion, tho' generally above " one half of every tax is expended in paying " proper officers to collect it. The overplus " may be depoſited in the treaſury for any " other pious uſe.

" And if this ſcheme ſhou'd be ſo fortunate " as to ſucceed, as I have no reaſon to doubt, " from the preſent diſpoſition of the houſe " of commons, all thoſe noblemen who ſhall " be appointed commiſſioners, will have ex- " cellent opportunities of promoting their ne- " phews, couſins, footmen, foſterers, valets, " and other valuable dependents to good in- " comes, and places of truſt and credit. But " I wou'd by all means have none but Eng- " liſhmen nominated to be tax-gatherers: be- " cauſe we may rationally ſuppoſe, that they " will be entirely free from prejudice, in fa- " vour of the natives of this kingdom.

" Thus wou'd a moderate tax upon our " vices apparently contribute to ſave this na- " tion from utter ruin. Many perſons who " have not the leaſt excuſe for their irregula- " rities at preſent (except the commendable " public-ſpirited contempt for religion) " might then plead in their own defence, that " their immoralities had preſerv'd their coun- " try. And by this means we might be fur-

" niſh'd with a multitude of patriots, who
" probably wou'd never prove ſo in any other
" reſpect.

" But I muſt humbly beg leave to diſſent
" from that religious gentleman, the admired
" author of the fable of the bees; tho', per-
" haps, ſuch a particularity of opinion may
" injure my character with ſeveral of my
" lay-brethren of moſt profeſſions: and I
" muſt publicly declare, that there can be
" no other method, half ſo good as mine,
" to make private vices public benefits.

LETTER XXXI.

To the Preſident BOUHIER;

On tragedies in proſe and blank verſe, ſhewing their incompatibility with the genius of the French tongue: with a criticiſm on Engliſh dramatic poetry.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

YOU very juſtly maintain, that tho' the fetters of rhyme are troubleſome to us, yet they hinder not a happy genius from ſoaring to the moſt ſublime beauties of poetry: an example of which is, in my opinion, to be found in the equally elegant and faithful tranſlation,

lation, which you have given us of the poem of PETRONIUS *on the civil war*.

The diſpute on proſe tragedies had like to have ſucceeded to that on ancient and modern authors. That firſt ſchiſm had ſcarcely been appeaſed, when M. DE LA MOTTE plunged our Parnaſſus into new troubles, by preaching the reformation of rhyme. Innovators in all ſorts of ſubjects, eaſily ſeduce people by conſtantly pretending to retrench abuſes: and yet their innovations moſt commonly bring on greater than thoſe which they would aboliſh. In vain has one of our moſt celebrated poets, equally capable and worthy of defending the common cauſe; in vain, I ſay, has M. DE VOLTAIRE demonſtrated both by his reaſonings, the falſity and dangerous conſequences of M. DE LA MOTTE'S opinion, and by tragedies ſuch as *Brutus*, the loſs we ſhould ſuſtain by baniſhing rhyme from the ſtage, according to the ſyſtem of his antagoniſt: M. DE LA MOTTE'S ſectators have after his death attempted to re-eſtabliſh a doctrine, which even in his life time was univerſally condemned.

Your zeal, ſir, for the glory of our muſes has made you eſpouſe their quarrel in your turn: and you have ſo ſolidly refuted the reaſons of thoſe, who would fain introduce proſe tragedies among us; that nothing farther could be ſaid on that ſubject, if the defenders of M. DE LA MOTTE'S ſyſtem had not armed themſelves with a new argument. They object the

example of the Engliſh, who have long ſince baniſhed rhyme from their ſtage: they triumph in having for them the unanimous ſuffrages of ſo judicious and learned a nation. And indeed the Engliſh, for talents, good ſenſe and philoſophical knowledge, occupy ſo diſtinguiſhed a rank in the literary world at this day, that their authority is of great weight on ſubjects of all kinds. However it allows us the liberty of examining; authority is but a favourable prejudice, and reaſon alone has the right of deciding.

If the Engliſh ſtage, ſince it expelled rhyme, had produced ſuch maſter-pieces, as ours had room to be jealous of; we ought to be ſorry for carrying a yoke, which hindered us from riſing as high as our neighbours: I think I can aſſert without prejudice, that this is not our caſe; for which I appeal to the judgment of all polite nations. Even had we been compelled to acknowledge the Engliſh as maſters of the ſtage, I ſhould doubt if their example ought to make us renounce rhyme; becauſe we have not the ſame advantages with them to do without it.

I ſincerely own, ſir, that their language, tho' harſher than ours, ſeems to me better adapted to poetry. Verſe owes its principal beauties to the ſtrength and boldneſs of expreſſions, and the Engliſh have a right to claim the one and the other as particular characters of their language. They uſe ſeveral expreſſions in proſe, on which we would ſcarcely venture in verſe. They have a greater number of verbs than

we: and after the manner of the Greeks and Latins they employ compound adjectives to expreſs in one word, what we cannot expreſs in our language without having recourſe to periphraſes. For example, they render *Achille aux pieds legers*, *l'Aurore aux doigts de roſe*, *l'hidre à pluſieurs têtes*, *le crime au front d'airain*; by *light-footed Achilles*, *the roſy-finger'd morn*, *the many-headed hydra*, *the brazen-fronted crime*. I could give you a hundred others, either of this, or of a different kind. The Engliſh ſay, *all-ſeeing*, *all-knowing*, &c. as well as *all-mighty*.* Thus their language, bolder than ours, ſtrongly renders by one adjective, what requires three or four words to expreſs it more feebly in ours.

The Engliſh, in imitation of the learned languages, allows the poets more inverſions of phraſes and tranſpoſitions of words, than the French: without cenſuring the ſeverity of our tongue, it may be ſaid that this chaſtity, which makes it ſo clear, is as injurious to poetry, as the boldneſs of the Engliſh is advantageous to it. The French ſeems to be the language of reaſon, the Engliſh that of enthuſiaſm. The good ſenſe peculiar to our neighbours is not at all perceptible in the genius of their tongue: and it is matter of wonder, that we are the people, who ſpeak the moſt chaſte and reaſonable tongue in Europe.

When the Engliſh poets find the expreſſions of their tongue too weak or too common, they

* The word *tout-puiſſant* is uſed in French, but *tout-voyant*, *tout-connoiſſant* are not.

they take the liberty to borrow others, either from the dead languages, or the polite languages in preſent uſe. They are even allowed to coin new words. When CORNEILE ſaid:

" Ton bras eſt *invaincu*, mais non pas invincible."

he was cenſured by the academy, and the word was not received. So happy a verſe would have been reliſhed in Engliſh, and the hazarded word would have enriched the tongue. As we cannot take thoſe great liberties, we have not a ſeparate language for poetry, as the Engliſh and Italians.

It is no wonder that the Engliſh poets, who allow themſelves and are allowed all ſorts of liberties, have had better ſucceſs than ours, in tranſlating into verſe the two epic maſter-pieces of antiquity. DRYDEN's Engliſh Virgil is read with pleaſure. POPE's Homer comes nearer ſtill to the beauties of the original. We cannot well hope ever to ſee a good tranſlation of the Iliad in French verſe. The privileges of our poetry are too limited.

The different meaſures, which the Engliſh admit in their verſes of ten ſyllables, which are almoſt the only ſort they uſe, give them greater variety, and their poets more facility to expreſs their thoughts in them. With thoſe advantages and many others which they enjoy, it is no way ſurpriſing that they do without rhyme in tragedy: but we, who have not the ſame privileges, would be in the wrong to follow

follow their example. Thoſe authors who would perſwade us to renounce rhyme, becauſe the Engliſh have ſhaken off its yoke, reaſon much like thoſe others, who propoſed to introduce dactyls and ſpondees into our verſe, becauſe the Greeks and Latins have uſed them in theirs.

Every tongue has a different genius, which ſhould be well known, before deciding what it ought to admit or reject in poetry. What ſuits with one, does not always ſuit with the other. The French has too many conſonants and harſh words to bear being meaſured as the Latin. On the other hand, the rules of our grammar are too ſevere, the conſtructions of our tongue too chaſte, the licences of our poetry too narrow, to be able to do without rhyme, as the Engliſh poetry. However let us examine a little what the Engliſh tragedy has gained by ſhaking it off. The reaſon that is given for expelling rhyme from our dramatic poetry, is that we may by that means be enabled to follow nature cloſer, and raiſe the tragic ſublime to a higher pitch: let us ſee if the Engliſh have reaped theſe advantages by ſo doing.

I ſhall ſay nothing of their greateſt tragical writer: SHAKESPEARE's genius, enemy to all conſtraint, has not leſs diſengaged itſelf from the rules of decency and probability too, than from the yoke of rhyme. He is the firſt Engliſh author, who dared to throw it off; at one time he ſpeaks in proſe, at another in verſe,

verſe, and ſometimes even in rhyme: he ſays things as they offer, and every where equally indulges his lazineſs and genius. Hence it is, that ſuch great beauties and ſuch great defects are found in his works.

The dramatic writers who have taken him for their model, have copied his defects, without coming near his ſublime: they have allowed themſelves all his negligences, without having the ſame beauties to ſet them off. It was lazineſs, that made SHAKESPEARE write ſeveral tragedies in proſe: it was for want of talent, that ſome authors have done the like. In regard to tragedies wrote entirely in proſe, DRYDEN informs us, that the public were quite tired of them in his time; and he maintains the impoſſibility of ſucceeding therein, without enlivening them with ſome comic ſcenes.

Such, ſir, has been the fate of proſaic tragedies on the Engliſh ſtage; and I leave you to judge if we have reaſon to envy it: had they been received on ours, they muſt have infallibly met with the ſame. The public would ſoon be diſguſted with the dull pieces that would be brought on it. As a proof of this aſſertion, I refer all people of taſte to the tragedy of *Oedipus* in proſe. I cannot comprehend how M. DE LA MOTTE, who had a talent and a philoſophical turn of mind, has ſo little improved the one, and made ſo bad uſe of the other.

Were we to baniſh rhyme from tragedy, the ſtage would become a prey to the moſt indifferent writers, who diſhonour it too much already by a number of dull comedies. Thoſe who have the wretched knack of compoſing bad romances, would not fail ſetting up for authors of tragedy: they would moſt readily enter into a career that muſt appear eaſy to them; and men of true genius would not uſe their utmoſt endeavours to ſupport their credit. We grow negligent, when difficulties do not warn us to be on our guard. The mind reſembles virtue in this particular: it never employs its whole ſtrength ſo effectually, nor ſhines forth with ſuch ſplendor, as when it lights on obſtacles.

I now proceed to their tragedies in verſe, which differ from ours in nothing but the ſuppreſſion of rhyme. One ſhould be apt to think, that the Engliſh poets, freed from this yoke, ought thereby the better to imitate the true language of the paſſions; that their dialogue ought to be more natural and better connected than that of the French poets; and in a word, that their tragedies ought to be more perfect than ours: and yet to me it appears that the contrary has happened. The Engliſh authors, the better to ſhun the language of proſe, have recourſe to the boldneſs of figures. They every-where affect the epic ſtrain, which in tragedy is as contrary at leaſt to nature, as rhyme itſelf. A prince rack'd by the moſt violent paſſion, interrupts himſelf

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in the middle of a thought, to make a moſt ample and frothy deſcription of a ſtorm. At the end of an act, whatever jealouſy or fury he is poſſeſſed with, he muſt cloſe it with a flowery ſimile. This fault is become ſo much in faſhion with the Engliſh, that even the wiſe and judicious ADDISON's *Cato*, that is to ſay, their moſt regular tragedy, is not exempt from it. In a word, on their ſtage as an author conſtantly runs after wit in comedy, ſo in tragedy the poet is too epic: and their dramatic works in general are full of ill-placed beauties. Their dialogue, far from being more natural than ours, is for the moſt part but a ſtring of epigrams: 'tis the poet that anſwers, not the perſon whom he introduces on the ſtage.

If M. DE LA MOTTE found fault with RACINE for having ſaid, ſpeaking of the monſter that devoured HIPPOLITUS:

"Le flot qui l'apporta recule épouvanté."

if the florid account, which THERAMENE gives of the death of that hero, has ſeemed to him to be out of place on the ſtage; what would he have thought of the Engliſh tragedies, in which thoſe epic beauties are ſo common; and where they are generally the moſt expected and moſt applauded?

I would be more cautious in expoſing this defect of the Engliſh poets, did it not proceed from a cauſe which does them honour. The faults which the public ſees with the greateſt indulgence, are thoſe of a bold genius; and ſuch

ſuch is that of the Engliſh: but a judicious reader, at the ſame time that he does them juſtice, and admires the fecundity of their imagination, cannot avoid condemning its abuſe. Wherever he finds beautiful verſes, he praiſes the talent; but if they happen to be out of the character of tragedy, he blames the uſe made of them.

The Engliſh poets, in conformity with the general character of their nation, cannot bear to be captivated by any yoke. They receive no rules for the ſtage, but ſuch as leave them at full liberty. But yet their Pegaſus would ſeldomer run aſtray, if they held tighter reins to him. Like their hunters, he ſtands leſs in need of ſpurs to give him ſpirit, than of a curb to check his impetuoſity. The Engliſh poets affect to ſupport an error, which is favourable to their lazineſs: they look on all rules to be arbitrary; and yet there are ſome which ought to be inviolable. It is not becauſe the Greeks and Romans have obſerved this or that rule, that we ſubmit to it; nor becauſe we are ſervile imitators, as the Engliſh call us; but becauſe experience has taught us its utility; becauſe we are ſure that thoſe rules are taken from nature, and that they are nothing more than the moſt certain and ſpeedy means of finding her out. Their famous SHAKESPEARE is a glaring example of the danger one runs of ſtraying from her. This poet, one of the greateſt genius's perhaps that ever exiſted, for want of knowing the rules of the ancients, or

at leaſt for neglecting to follow them, has not produced a ſingle play, that is not a monſter in its kind: if there are admirable things in all his pieces, not one of them will bear reading throughout.

In order to deliver our tragedy from the ſervitude of rhyme, we are referred to the example of the Engliſh; but we are not told at what price they have purchaſed their ranſom from that ſlavery. It would not be allowed us, to ſupply the want of rhyme with all the riches of epic poetry: and what paſſes with them for beauty, would among us be deemed a blemiſh. And pray what would be the conſequence? That tragedy would ſoon ſink into the familiar, that is, the low ſtyle: for in tragedy the low and familiar are quite the ſame. Thoſe who would endeavour to avoid this ſtyle, ſo contrary to the character of tragedy, which ſhould always be noble; would be compelled, like the Engliſh, to have recourſe to the boldneſs of figures: and this would throw them farther off from nature. In ſhort, I look on the majeſty of the buſkin to be incompatible with proſe: and in our language, blank verſe would approach too near common diſcourſe.

There, ſir, are ſeveral ſcraps of reaſoning on this ſubject, which I have thrown together in my uſual way without connection or method: for I have not pretended to enter into a regular diſpute with the partiſans of tragedies in proſe or blank verſe: the only end I propoſed

ſed to myſelf was to furniſh you with new arms to make head againſt them, in caſe you take a fancy to enter the liſts afreſh. With my utmoſt endeavours, I could not uſe them to the ſame advantage as you can. In literary engagements, as well as in thoſe where men expoſe their lives, it is not the force of arms, but the art of employing them that ſecures the victory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XXXII.

To the Count DE C***;

Containing a diſcourſe of taſte.

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD,

IT ſeems to me that taſte and the elegant arts are as much behind hand in England, as philoſophy and the abſtruſe ſciences have been improved there. The Engliſh in ſeveral reſpects are not yet arrived at the point where we were two centuries ago. It cannot be denied that they have really diſtinguiſhed themſelves in poetry. But if their muſe has taken the boldeſt flights with regard to genius, ſhe has

has not improved much in reſpect to taſte. That delicacy of thought, without which nothing beautiful is done of any kind, is wanting in moſt of their authors: WALLER, ADDISON, THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY, POPE, and ſome few others excepted, there is little to be praiſed in their writers beſides a juſtneſs of reaſoning or ſtrength of imagination. They have ſeveral works impreſſed with the ſtamp of genius, but very few that bear the character of the graces. With a little more prudence and taſte, MILTON would have made a maſterpiece of his *Paradiſe Loſt*.

Every nation has its peculiar merit. The Italians pique themſelves on ſenſe, the Engliſh on genius: the French may pride themſelves on taſte. There is not a polite language, into which our good works have not been tranſlated, and have not ſerved for models: our neighbours do not acknowledge all the obligations they have to us. The French tongue is in a manner become the language of Europe, and ſeems deſtined to the glory of ſucceeding the Latin. Tis no wonder that the ſeveral people, that were under ſubjection to the Romans, ſpoke their tongue: but why is the French at preſent ſo common in all the courts of Europe? Why do they ſpeak it as familiarly at that of London, as the Engliſh or German; unleſs becauſe we are patterns to our neighbours in all things relating to *agrément* and the graces? This unanimous conſent of the enlightened nations

tions around us, is a teſtimony above all ſuſpicion.

You, my lord, whoſe ſteady and penetrating mind equally extends to the ſciences and elegant arts, you who know the Engliſh and their productions of all ſorts, be pleaſed to inform me, why they have ſo little ſucceſs in every thing that depends on taſte; and why the graces have ſo little familiarity with them in whatever they do. Are exactneſs and the geometrical compaſs in reality ſo contrary to the graces? Does that conſtraint, which the rule puts them under, lead them aſtray from taſte? You, who enjoy this valuable gift in its full extent, tell me what is this taſte, which men of great merit, and even whole nations have ſought in vain. The Romans, who were rivals to the Greeks in literature, were not capable of being their diſciples in arts. If the ſciences alone can give taſte, where ought it to be more common than in this country? No people has cultivated them with greater ſucceſs than the Engliſh: and yet, both the models of the ancients, and the examples of the moderns, have been equally uſeleſs to them in this point.

If I miſtake not, it is eaſier to paint taſte under ſenſible and particular images, than to give a general and metaphyſical definition of it. It might be communicated, if it cou'd be defined. But it is of the number of thoſe things, which are little known but by their negative qualities, and the eſſential ones of

which have hitherto eſcaped the reſearches of human underſtanding. Thus the great maſters of this art have very well marked out to us the defects that are contrary to it; but they have not diſcloſed thoſe beauties which are its ſource. They have rather ſhewn us the ways that turn from it, than the paths that lead to it: I ſay paths, becauſe all the roads that lead to truth are narrow. There is no arriving at the beautiful part of works of ſenſe and wit, which is the true part of them, as well as at virtue which is the true part of morality, but by difficult and unfrequented roads. If there are ſome talents, which excel with little or no pains; if ſome men are ſo happily formed, as to find no difficulty in any thing but being vicious; theſe examples do honour to our nature, but there is no conſequence to be drawn from them in our favour. The Pythagoreans made good certain and finite, and evil uncertain and infinite: the ſame thing may be ſaid of taſte, a thouſand roads turn from it, and only one leads to it. Even thoſe who have had the happineſs to find it, have not been able to teach it to others. This choice depends perhaps on a certain delicacy of ſentiments, which rules cannot give.

PLATO himſelf, of whom we have two dialogues on the beautiful, rather teaches what this beautiful is not, than what it is.

Perhaps taſte is nothing elſe in general but the moſt ſimple and natural order of things, and on particular ſubjects but the moſt noble

and

and proper manner of expreſſion. If I caſt my eye on a picture of CORREGIO, if I read a tragedy of RACINE; the one and the other equally confirm me in this idea. And I dare affirm, that it agrees with the principles of the ingenious author of the *Eſſai ſur le beau*, a work as proper for forming our morals as our taſte, and in which effectually reign truth, order, the honeſt and the decent; which, as he himſelf ſays, conſtitute the eſſential beauty, which we naturally ſeek in works of genius.

According to him, in the phyſical as in the moral world, order is always the foundation of beauty. Why does a building pleaſe us? It is becauſe the ſimilitude, the equality, the correſpondence of its parts, reduces the whole to a ſort of unity which ſatisfies our reaſon.

In works of genius order is abſolutely neceſſary, becauſe there is an order exiſting between different truths. Yet in the ſenſe in which I uſe the word, it does not ſignify that dry diſagreeable method, which conſtantly ſtalks along by firſt and ſecond points, articles and ſections. This practice of the ſchools is diametrically oppoſite to taſte. The order that I mean, conſiſts in a natural ſucceſſion of ideas, the concatenation of which is always perceptible, tho' it be not expreſsly declared; in the care of placing every truth in its right point of view, *ſo that the firſt illuſtrate the ſucceeding ones, and that theſe in their turn reflect a ſort of new luſtre on the firſt by their natural ſequel.*

I mean in fine thoſe happy tranſitions, which conſtantly denote a writer of the firſt claſs; and the art of which is unknown to middling authors; thoſe tranſitions, I ſay, which, while they link the ſeveral parts of a diſcourſe together, enrich it by beauties that ſeem to flow from the nature of the ſubject, and yet are quite unexpected. A judicious reader, capable of deducing conſequences from principles, is not much obliged to you for leading him by ways that he knew before: the only means to pleaſe him in ſo doing, is to ſtrew them with flowers.

This order, as I explain it, is really what is ſeldomeſt found in the works of the Engliſh. The mind ſeems every where to partake of the nature of the body. The inhabitants of this iſland have ſomewhat hard in their countenances, and ſtiff in their motions. Few of them join the graces to the beauty of features, or the noble air to the advantage of a good ſhape. Their converſations, their writings, nay their very virtues are blended with ſome portion of the hardneſs of their character.

Again it is uncommon among the Engliſh to ſeek any thing but ſtrength in their expreſſions: the greateſt part of them will not even allow the diſtinction of noble and low expreſſions. One might almoſt doubt if they are affected by the one, ſince their organs are not fine enough to be hurt by the others.

On the contrary, ſuch of the French works as have taſte joined to invention, are equally remarkable for that ſimple and natural order of ideas, and the happy choice of expreſſions, in which they are dreſſed. Perſwaded that an idea cannot make a beautiful appearance, without being nobly expreſſed, we no more ſuffer a writer to be negligent in the choice of his words, than in the ordering of his thoughts.

Mr. DRYDEN, one of the moſt witty Engliſh poets, has very juſtly remarked, that as our dreſs ought to be modeſt, our expreſſions, which are the dreſs of our thoughts, ought to be decent: but he himſelf in this very place errs againſt the rule he lays down for others. He compares words to that part of our cloathing, which decency does not allow to name. The Engliſh writers ſeem to be ignorant, that the graces are never found out of the company of decency.

From the ſenſation of the palate we have borrowed the word taſte, to expreſs the judgment we form of things, which are not ſubject to certain and evidently demonſtrable rules. This metaphor is the more juſt, becauſe aſte appears perſonal and quite indetermined, as well as in our palate and other ſenſes. Our minds are differently affected by the ſame things, when they are of ſuch a nature as not to be demonſtrable.

What pleaſes at Paris is diſliked at London. Old people and young have different ways of thinking. Thus the country, the age, the diverſity of characters or inclinations are ſo

many ſources of the variety of taſtes. Whence it ſeems to follow that beauty, of what kind ſoever, has nothing fixed and abſolute. But if there are taſtes of mode and caprice, ſome acquired by habit, others produced by particular affections; poſſibly there is ſome eſſential one, founded on nature and truth: and I ſhould be tempted to believe, that all the diſputes which ariſe on this ſubject, are occaſioned purely for want of making this diſtinction.

And indeed what is really beautiful, independent of all mutual agreement and by its own excellence, ſeems to give pleaſure to reaſon. If in arts and works of genius, all men are not touched with that which I call real beauty, it is becauſe ſome of them have not received from nature ſuch ſenſe as may be affected by them, and others have not exerciſed it ſufficiently to form a ſound judgment thereof. But all thoſe who are properly diſpoſed to perceive it, know it wherever it appears. In the moral, as well as in the phyſical world, none ſee but thoſe that have eyes.

If taſte was merely arbitrary, why ſhould France be the leader of Europe in every thing relating to it? The preference which is granted at this day to the maſterpieces of the Greeks and Romans over the productions of the Goths, which are ſometimes ingenious, but always fantaſtic, ſeems to be founded in nature, and may poſſibly have a phyſical cauſe, which has not as yet been thoroughly diſcovered. In all

parts

parts of knowledge we are pretty well acquainted with the effects, but there are few, of which we can riſe to the diſcovery of the cauſes.

Metaphyſics, which can alone open us the ways that lead to the firſt principles of every thing, are a ſcience which ſeems common, becauſe it is in every body's mouth. The wit thinks he knows it, and the philoſopher that he teaches it. But it is an immenſe ocean, in which all branches of human knowledge, like ſo many rivers, are ſwallowed up. If a few men of ſuperior genius and exquiſite ſenſe have made ſome diſcoveries therein, how many others have been loſt in thoſe unknown ſeas! No ſure magnetical compaſs has been found to ſteer by. BACON, DES CARTES, LOCKE have happily ſounded ſome ſpaces of it: but in how many others have all their efforts been fruitleſs! Nay perhaps there are ſome, of which the mind of man ought never to preſume to fathom the depth.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXIII.

To Abbé OLIVET.

Of the ſmall progreſs eloquence has made in England, notwithſtanding the great opportunities the Engliſh have to cultivate it; and the perſonality and want of decency in the debates of the two houſes.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

THE Engliſh have ſuch an eſteem for our language, that they are pleas'd to read even the works of CICERO in French; and your tranſlations of them, are in great requeſt here. That of his *Tuſculan Queſtions*, which you have juſt publiſhed, in concert with preſident BOUHIER, has been approv'd of in England by all who are competent judges of the beauties of the original, and of the exactneſs, with which both of you have tranſlated them. The notes with which that illuſtrious magiſtrate has enrich'd the text, have had the approbation of the learned at Oxford and Cambridge. They have done juſtice to his profound learning and fine judgment. This, ſir, is the judgment the learned part of England have paſs'd on this laſt per-

for-

formance. Without making you a compliment, I can assure you, that you are both as well known, and as much esteem'd here, as in France.

As to what regards the progress eloquence has made in this country, it by no means equals that of the other productions of the mind. The English are the greatest geometricians in Europe; they have had great philosophers, great poets, and great critics; they have had a NEWTON, a MILTON, and an ADDISON, but they have not yet had a celebrated orator amongst them. You ought to be the more surpris'd at this, because, of all the polite nations at this time, England affords the most opportunities of cultivating the lofty and sublime eloquence. What produced the masterpieces of this kind, which you have so happily translated into our language, what form'd the DEMOSTHENES and the CICEROS, was the advantage the Greek and Roman orators had, of speaking on peace and war, on the preservation or ruin of the republic, and of governing (as one may say) a whole nation by speech. And thus, according to THUCIDIDES, PERICLES who had the gift of restraining the Athenians, when they were too daring, and of raising their courage, when too timid, was in effect the king of a titular republic. His persuasive eloquence on the bench, made whatever he desired pass into laws, and he reign'd as much by the force of his eloquence, as PISISTRATUS by that of his arms.

The

The Engliſh have the ſame advantages and the ſame opportunities; the liberty they enjoy, ought to give their minds that elevation, which produces ſublime eloquence. A peer of the kingdom in the houſe of lords, and the repreſentatives of a borough in that of the commons, have the intereſts of the ſtate, and ſafety of their country in their hands. Like the orators of Rome and Athens, they ſpeak before legiſlators who are aſſembled only to procure the eaſe and happineſs of the people. The parliament of England repreſents the nation itſelf, and poſſeſſes the principal part of the legiſlative authority. What is more capable of raiſing the genius than theſe great intereſts, than the publick welfare, and the preſervation of a whole nation! Beſides theſe motives, which can only affect ſouls of the firſt rank, in England, as heretofore at Rome; riches, reputation, and even authority itſelf, are alſo the reward of eloquence. Whoever is diſtinguiſh'd for his eloquence in the houſe of commons, may become the firſt perſon in it; that is to ſay, may enjoy the moſt important, and perhaps the moſt honourable employ in the nation; ſince the ſpeaker of that aſſembly is, as I may ſay, the man of the people. Nevertheleſs, the ſpeeches made in parliament, no more reſemble in energy and elevation of ſtyle, thoſe with which the Roman orators made the roſtrum reſound; than the parliament houſe reſembles in majeſty and grandeur, the place where the Roman ſenate held it's aſſemblies.

The

The Engliſh accuſtom themſelves to ſpeak *extempore*, on all ſubjects that are treated on in parliament; the matter may be prepared, but their diſcourſes are very rarely ſtudied: for which reaſon there appears more logick in the ſeries of their reaſonings, then rhetorick in their manner of urging them. *I have always been ſurpriſed*, ſays one of the wiſeſt Engliſh writers, *that our young nobility ſtudy the art of ſpeaking ſo little; 'tis of all others the moſt honourable and moſt uſeful, in ſuch a government as ours is; and our orators are unpardonable for neglecting ſo much, the precepts the ancients have left us in that reſpect.* There are, indeed, in both houſes, ſome who have the gift of ſpeech, and who are heard with pleaſure; ſuch as the Earl of C*** and my lord C*** in the houſe of lords, who paſs here for the moſt eloquent men of their age; in the houſe of commons, mr. P*** ſpeaks with great boldneſs and vivacity; mr. W***'s tone is more even and more affected. But in general, I can aſſure you, when one comes to read the greater part of the ſpeeches that are made in parliament, one does not find in them that noble and ſtrong eloquence, which ſtrikes and tranſports us in the orations of a *Demoſthenes* and a *Cicero*. Perhaps it may be, as they ſay, thoſe who make the moſt noiſe in parliament, have not the general intereſt of the nation ſo much in view, as their own. 'Tis certain ſordid paſſions cannot inſpire noble ſentiments. A zeal for the public good makes men eloquent,

quent, the ſpirit of party makes only ſilly declaimers. Nothing leſs than an ardent love for our country, and an intire attachment to the welfare of the people, can make a true orator. Theſe generous ſentiments can only affect great minds, and men of the moſt ſublime genius, are alone capable of arriving at them.

A mean ſoul does not endeavour to move out of it's ſphere, it diſcovers nothing beyond the narrow limits in which it is circumſcrib'd; it may eagerly purſue its own private intereſt, or that of ſome others whoſe inclinations are agreable to it, but is not ſuſceptible of that laudable ambition, which ſo enlarges the faculties of the ſoul, that it comprehends the greateſt objects; the advantage of a whole ſociety, the happineſs of a million of people, are then the only ones that ſeem worthy to move it. Vice makes a man center in himſelf, virtue raiſes him above humanity.

The illuſtrious archbiſhop of Cambray, was of this ſuperior claſs of men; nothing but the love of the public welfare, could inſpire him with courage to make truth ſpeak, in the midſt even of a court. TELEMACUS is the cauſe of nations pleaded at the tribunal of kings. That eloquent prelate throughout the whole, ſhews thoſe whom providence has placed on a throne, that their true intereſts are inſeparable from thoſe of their ſubjects; that a king may acquire fame by his conqueſts, but can only be great by the love of his people:

people: and that perfect heroiſm conſiſts in the exerciſe of thoſe virtues alone, which conduce moſt to the happineſs of mankind. What do thoſe owe to their birth, which has given them a right to watch over the ſafety of their fellow-ſubjects! Is there a more flattering glory, a more ſenſible ſatisfaction to a rational being, than to contribute to the happineſs of his equals? To be the benefactor of mankind, is to approach as near as poſſible to the deity; * yet nevertheleſs in this country, as well as all others, how rarely are thoſe to be found, who have nothing in view but the public welfare!

QUINTILIAN remarks of HORTENSIUS, that in reading his pleadings, we dont find them worthy the reputation of their author, whoſe principal merit was his action; if the ſame thing happens here, when they publiſh thoſe ſpeeches which have been moſt renown'd in parliament, it cannot proceed from the ſame cauſe, becauſe the Engliſh intirely neglect this part of the orator, which DEMOSTHENES ſaid was the firſt, the ſecond, and the third. Some of them, if you will believe them, would even baniſh the uſe of all oratory, out of their aſſemblys, as unworthy of the place, and the weightineſs of the matters there debated. They pretend that the oratorial art is only fit for thoſe, who ſuffer themſelves to be govern'd by their paſſions; and not for thoſe, who follow

* Homines ad deos nullâ re propiùs accedunt, quam ſalutem hominibus dando. Cicer.

low the dictates of reaſon. But ſuch are mankind in general, that they are more eaſily lead by the one, than the other. 'Tis not to be preſum'd, that an aſſembly of five hundred perſons ſhould, upon every occaſion, embrace the truth: the greateſt part of them may miſtake it, if it is not cloath'd with all the charms of perſwaſion. Why ſhould they neglect the uſe of a weapon, that ſo long preſerv'd the Roman republic? Let us not require greater perfection from men, than human nature admits of; we muſt for their advantage, conform ourſelves to their weakneſſes; and move their paſſions, when we cannot convince their underſtandings.

'Tis undeniable, that violent and mercenary orators, in the Grecian commonwealths, often employed their talents to make injuſtice triumph, and oppreſs virtue. And is there any thing that wicked and corrupt men do not pervert the uſe of? But even this abuſe of eloquence proves its power, and conſequently the advantage which might be derived from it for the ſervice of our country, when we have virtue enough to prefer that, to all other conſiderations.

The end of true eloquence, is to ſet virtue in its cleareſt light, to inſtruct men in their duty, to inſpire us with thoſe principles, and implant thoſe noble and generous ſentiments in our hearts, that make us renounce all perſonal advantages which are contrary to that of

our

fellow-ſubjects; and laſtly, convince us, that there can be no true happineſs, but what is founded on moral virtues.

But an orator hardly ever convinces us, unleſs he himſelf ſeems convinced. When an author thinks what he writes, without perceiving it, he draws his own picture in his writings; and 'tis that makes them appear natural: we perceive he delivers his ſentiments, by the warmth of his expreſſion. He who is inſenſible of what he ſays, reaſons without being animated: the one would only prove, the other would convince. He who is convinced, would convince others; he would make proſelytes: the other would only ſhew his wit. How many ancient philoſophers have only preached virtue; EPICTETUS makes me love it.

If thoſe who have the advantage of being the defenders of liberty, in the Engliſh parliament followed the examples of the orators of Rome and Greece, they would not only inſpire the members, who are intruſted with the guardianſhip of the laws, with their ſentiments; but the people alſo, who have choſen them to be their protectors. Whatever is ſaid in theſe aſſemblies is ſoon made public. Here, as formerly at * Rome, there are able

* Cicero ſpeaks of this art of writing in ſhort-hand, in epiſtle the 32, of Lib. 13, to Atticus. Plutarch in the life of Cato ſays, the invention of it was attributed to Cicero himſelf.

The Perſians have alſo a ſort of cypher, which they make uſe of inſtead of common writing.

tranſcribers, who, by means of a ſhort hand, can bring away a diſcourſe, tho' pronounced ever ſo faſt. They are actually publiſhing a collection of all thoſe that have been ſpoke in both houſes of parliament, ſince the great æra of the reſtoration of CHARLES II. *

I was ſometime ſince in the houſe of lords; they were then debating a queſtion, in which, perhaps, the liberty of the nation is moſt nearly concerned; they were debating, whether they ſhould continue the army on the footing of ſixteen thouſand men, or reduce it to that of twelve thouſand. I was at firſt ſtruck with the awe that auguſt aſſembly ought to inſpire; but during the heat of the debate, ſeveral words ſlipp'd from thoſe that ſpoke, which muſt neceſſarily diminiſh it. I found in every thing that was ſaid there, more hatred to the miniſter, than regard for the public welfare. Invectives and jeſts ſupplied the place of reaſon, in the diſpute. The enemies to the miniſtry maintained, that the powers which could give umbrage to England, and even France itſelf, more to be feared than all others, had nothing in view at that time, but juſtice and peace. My lord CARTERET made an encomium on the miniſter, which the king, who every day gives us cauſe to praiſe the mildneſs of his government, has placed at the head of his counſels. A partiſan of the court admitted this encomium was juſt,

* This collection was publiſhed in 1741.

juſt, but ſaid, that miniſter, tho' ever ſo virtuous, was not immortal. A third, as well known for his wit as for oppoſition to mr. WALPOLE, replied to him, and convinced them that the French miniſter was really not immortal. *But*, ſaid he, *his ſucceſſor will not be ſo neither, nor he who will ſucceed him, and England is in a miſerable condition, if ſhe muſt maintain numerous armies, becauſe the French miniſters are not immortal.* This repartee cauſed laughter, but was not capable of moving, which is the end of eloquence, and ought to have been the object of the ſpeaker.

Thus according to their different characters, ſome rail violently againſt every thing the miniſter does, and others jeſt, ſometimes indecently, on the moſt ſerious and important ſubjects. One is uſed to cut jokes, and another to take them up. They compliment thoſe of their party, and inveigh againſt thoſe whoſe opinions they oppoſe. They affront each other, and aſk pardon; and whilſt they are thus govern'd by their private paſſions, or perſonal animoſities, they looſe ſight of the main point in diſpute, and ſacrifice the intereſt of the public, to that of their party.

How much ſooner and better, ſaid mr. WALPOLE one day to the houſe of commons, *would affairs be debated, if we would in our debates, avoid all perſonal invectives and offenſive jeſts. By theſe means a lye paſſes for truth, and ignorance which has recourſe to them, ſerves inſtead of capacity. If our votes are obtained by*

drollery and banter, there is no occaſion for wiſdom and honeſty, to get a majority, laughter and railery will be ſufficient; which any man of an ordinary capacity may practiſe as ſucceſsfully as another.

Here is a very different ſpeech made in the houſe of lords, by one of the greateſt authority there. *My lords, the two young noblemen who open'd the debate, ſpoke with ſuch a dignity, ſo much energy in their reaſoning, and ſuch propriety of expreſſion, that I began to think myſelf in a ſenate of Rome, of Athens, or of Lacedæmon; for which reaſon, I ought to thank the noble duke, who ſpoke laſt, for having brought me back into a true * Engliſh houſe of lords.* Is not this attacking the honour of the aſſembly itſelf, to dare to teſtify ſuch a ſignal contempt for it, and impute to the whole, what might be the errour of only a particular member? Is it ſurpriſing that contemptible pamphleteers ſpeak ſo diſreſpectfully of the members of parliament, when they themſelves ſo ill obſerve that regard, which they owe to each other, and firſt ſet the ſcandalous example of want of reſpect? Thus when one of them accuſes the greater number, of ſelling themſelves to the miniſter, and ſays; *that as they receive wages of him, he wiſhed they alſo would wear his livery, that they might be known* *;

* Speech of my lord Bathurſt. Journal of the houſe of lords, vol. 7 page 554.

known *; he furniſhes matter for the moſt abuſive libels.

I have only mentioned theſe abuſes, becauſe of the unavoidable influence they have on eloquence, the taſte for which they have intirely vitiated. Perhaps the remedy might be worſe than the diſeaſe itſelf. Perhaps they only prove, that the Engliſh are men, and like other men.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XXXIV.

To Monſieur DE BUFFONS;

The reaſon why there are ſo few good houſes in London; the magnificence of the Engliſh nobility in the country, and how both ſexes ſpend their time there.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

LOndon being a very large, very rich and very dull city, and where the ſea-coal ſmoke in a manner poiſons the air one breaths in it; 'tis not ſurpriſing that people of eaſy fortunes, of what rank ſoever they are, take ſo little pleaſure there, and ſtay no longer than buſineſs

* Vol. 6. page 379.

ſineſs obliges them. A duke lives in a ſmaller houſe here, than many tradeſmen do at Paris. There are few houſes remarkable either for the beauty of the buildings, or richneſs of the furniture. I could count above fifty houſes, in the ſuburb of St. Germains only, which are taken no notice of, that are ſuperior to the duke of BEDFORD's houſe, which the Engliſh boaſt ſo much of.

'Tis not that they are afraid of expence in this reſpect, the natural cauſe, which I have already mention'd, contributes more to this difference, than all others. This ſame ſea-coal ſmoak, that obliges them, be it what weather it will to go out every morning, to breath the freſh air, hinders many from building palaces in a city, that is diſagreeable to them. Beſides, 'tis equally pernicious to paintings, guilding, and in a word, to rich furniture, as to the health of the inhabitants.

For this reaſon, the nobility do not regard London as the place of their reſidence, and foreigners, who ſee them mix'd pel-mel with the merchants of this great city, form a very bad idea of them. One would imagine they regarded the houſes they live in here, only as a ſort of inns to lodge in, during the ſitting of parliament; 'tis only in the country, that they diſplay all their magnificence: they have all of them ſpacious houſes there, numerous families, and parks full of deer and ſtags. They keep an open table there for the gen-

tle-

tlemen of the county, and live in ſuch a manner as ſhews their wealth and grandure. As our nobility, whoſe eſtates have been impair'd by the luxury of Paris, are ſometimes oblig'd to ſpend ſix months in the country, to patch them up again; the Engliſh do juſt the contrary; they ſtay in London when they have a mind to ſave money, and only live frugally there, to be able to live with more ſplendour on their eſtates in the country.

They divide their leiſure hours, when in the country, between hunting, which is their favourite diverſion, and the table; where they ſit longer than we do in France. The reſt of their leiſure, ſome ſpend in applying themſelves to agriculture, and the pleaſures of domeſtic life; others in bodily exerciſes, moſt of them very violent. That which they ſeem to like beſt, is one, at which they play with all their footmen; and that, ſay they, *becauſe the Engliſh have a juſter idea of true greatneſs than other nations; and are not afraid of expoſing theirs by converſing familiarly with their inferiors.* Though we aſſent to this elogy, yet we may doubt whether it be the true reaſon for ſuch a cuſtom; becauſe, I think I diſcover a more ſenſible, and truer one: and that is, they are uneaſy when alone. The Engliſh viſit one another in the country, but ſeldom live together there. Wearineſs is a tyrant that diſquiets the life of the greateſt part of mankind; and tho' his ſway

extends equally over the country as well as the city, yet noblemen are more affected by it, than their inferiors.

Happineſs is not join'd to the poſſeſſion of riches. The peaſant is often happier than his lord; the daily labour of the firſt, makes him enjoy that tranquillity of mind, which is the moſt valuable of all worldly things, and which the wealth of the whole univerſe can't purchaſe. In the midſt of riches, we are tormented with the immoderate deſire of heaping them up, or with the fear of loſing them. Few men are capable of enjoying them. Nature has joined a ſort of a poiſon to them, that is almoſt always fatal to the repoſe of thoſe who poſſeſs them.

And thus, amidſt the greateſt plenty, there is the moſt neceſſity to ſpend. Let us not diſguiſe the truth, however mortifying to us; 'tis not out of friendſhip that men deſire each others company, 'tis only out of neceſſity. 'Tis this makes the ſervant, in retirement, a companion for his maſter. A man is the moſt dangerous company in the world for himſelf; and that is the reaſon ſo many men are ſick of themſelves. All cannot ſenſibly enjoy the rich preſents nature makes us; have a taſte for agriculture, love gardening, take a pleaſure in ſeeing a roſe blow; all are not capable of receiving inſtruction from the leſſon, which the laborious bee ſets us, when ſhe ranges ſo many flowers, to collect the juices, of which ſhe compoſes her honey: and yet theſe are the only

ly pleaſures, that neither tire or diſguſt in the country, and which a man muſt love, to be really pleaſed with reſidence in the country. But how few people have that tranquillity of mind, which produces this ſenſibility! The wiſe, the happy man, is he who can equally enjoy ſolitude amidſt the hurry of courts; or be in company when ſhut up alone in his cloſet. What happens to others? The weariſomneſs that drove them from town, follows them into the country; and to make uſe of a familiar, but very expreſſive phraſe; they do every thing, they even play with their footmen *to kill time*. How ſilly we are! Time is our greateſt treaſure, and yet we are perplex'd to find ways to throw it away; we complain that our life is ſhort, and every day ſeems too long. We ſhorten it ourſelves by not enjoying the preſent, which is ours; and running inceſſantly after the future, which does not belong to us.

The Engliſh ladies alſo, who have been always thought as proud as the French, amuſe themſelves in the country with their women; and are often reduc'd to the neceſſity of dancing with them, for want of knowing how to ſpend their leiſure time. They cannot get the better of their wearineſs, but in a crowd and buſtle; and from hence come the dances of twelve or eighteen perſons at a time.

The ſame uneaſineſs that in the country forces an Engliſh peer to play with his groom; makes them, in other countries, afraid

to

to leave the city. For how many people really think, *there is no life for perſons of diſtinction out of Paris?* Man born to labour, ought to think *this ſickneſs of himſelf*, a ſort of tribute, which he, who will live idly, is forc'd to pay to nature. To exempt themſelves from this, they have recourſe in different countries, to quite contrary means. At London, they paſs their time in publick-houſes; at Paris, they do nothing but viſit each other daily, without having any buſineſs together, and very often even nothing to ſay. The greateſt part of thoſe who come into a houſe, would do juſt as well, both with regard to themſelves and thoſe they viſit; if they only left their names in writing at the door. What ſo many people are in ſearch after, by this continual motion; at Conſtantinople, where they are more ſedentary, they find by the help of opium and ſmoaking tobacco. The art of true enjoyment is above the reach of moſt men; they only know how to baniſh ſorrow. To avoid this cruel weariſomneſs which perſecutes them, one ruins himſelf in building, and another at play; ſome plunge themſelves into misfortunes, and others run into the moſt ridiculous follies. This diſorder of the mind turns that into madneſs, which is only taſte in wiſe people. A man ſpends all his time in making a large collection of books which he does not read; a woman is unhappy, if ſhe has not a dozen lap-dogs always about her. So many people amuſe themſelves with parrots, becauſe they have nothing in them,

them, to amuſe themſelves with. If I miſtake not, this uneaſineſs is the ſource, of almoſt all the follies and extravagances of mankind.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XXXV.

To Mr. FRERET;

Mr. SMITH's *touch-ſtone, to diſtinguiſh Tories from Whigs.*

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

MANY people ſuffer themſelves to be ſo prejudiced, in favour of the reputation the Engliſh have for wiſdom, that they are blind to every thing which is not agreeable to it; and others who are only ſtruck with ſome defects, which are peculiar to them, perhaps do not enough admire their zeal for the maintenance of their laws and liberty: there is a medium between theſe two extremes, which a wiſe man ſhould keep, as you conſtantly obſerve in every thing you ſay to me. 'Tis certain their different ſentiments with regard to the government, occaſion many inconveniences in civil ſociety. One finds, as it were, two nations in the ſame. If they have not

not our follies, they have others, and you are too well acquainted with mankind to be ſurpriſed at it; follies are the appurtenances of human nature.

You remember, ſir, to have read in the *Spectator*, that there was a time in England, when the women ſhewed what party they were of, by the ſide of the face on which they wore their patches. There is a work, of this odd fantaſtical humour, juſt publiſhed, which if I miſtake not, deſerves to be known, at leaſt for its ſingularity. This is the title of it;

THE TOUCH-STONE,

Or a plain and eaſy method to diſtinguiſh an honeſt and true Engliſhman, from a falſe one; that is to ſay, a friend to liberty and his country, from a ſlave to fortune and the court; a work very neceſſary for all gentlemen, tradeſmen, artificers, labourers, and others, who have a right to vote at elections. By NATHANAEL SMITH, *of the city of Leiceſter.*

Timeo Danaos & Dona ferentes.

London, by BERNARD LINTOT, 1737.

I begin with the preface, the whole of which I will ſend you, that you may be the better able to judge of the character of the author, and his manner of thinking.

"The

" The flouriſhing condition and glory of
" England diminiſh in proportion, as the de-
" pravity of our manners increaſes; corrup-
" tion is now become ſo general, that nobody
" gets into * parliament, without buying the
" votes of the city or county he repreſents. E-
" very body who aſpires to be a member of
" the houſe of commons, is obliged to keep an
" open table during the time of his election:
" and thoſe who have a right to elect, do not
" perceive that on theſe occaſions, people of
" different parties make uſe of all artifices to
" deceive them. The ravenous wolf there
" puts on the innocent lambſkin, he who has
" ſecretly ſold himſelf to the court, ſwears by
" the holy goſpel to conſtantly oppoſe the mi-
" niſter; and the honeſt artificer and ſimple
" farmer believe him on his word; the great-
" eſt part of them, either for want of expe-
" rience or capacity, being incapable of diſ-
" covering the cheat under his diſguiſe. Thus
" a man thinks he chooſes one who is zealous
" for his country's intereſt, when he gives his
" vote to an ambitious wretch, who is ready
" to ſacrifice it to his own.

" The misfortunes which happen daily by
" by the artifices the whigs * make uſe of,

" to

* The author means the houſe of commons, as appears by what follows.

* Theſe names of Whig and Tory, have not always ſignified the parties for, and againſt the court. In my lord B——'s letters, a work, which for the elegancy of the ſtyle, and ſolidity of the Reaſonings, ſurpaſſes every thing the Engliſh have produced

" to deceive us, have determined me to pub-
" liſh the obſervations I have made, on ſo
" important a ſubject. They are ſo many in-
" fallible rules to diſtinguiſh a true Tory,
" from one who is only ſo in appearance.
" At the ſame time theſe rules are very in-
" telligible to every body; 'tis not neceſſary
" either to have ſtudied, or frequented the
" coffee-houſes in London, to apply them.
" He that has eyes to ſee, let him ſee; and
" he that has ears to hear, let him hear. I
" teach to diſtinguiſh a Whig from a Tory,
" by his manner of dreſſing, acting, ſpeak-
" ing, drinking, eating, &c. In a word, a
" man need only have eyes and ears, to ne-
" ver miſtake.

The fiſt chapter is intitled, *Of the conſtitution, phyſiognomy, tone of voice, &c. of the Tories.* I only propoſe to give you an account of the author's ideas, without adopting them myſelf. His deſire to create mirth, has often made him, in his remarks, ſacrifice exactneſs to caprice. The drollery and continual exaggeration throughout the whole work, ſhew you very plainly, that 'tis a ſatire equally extravagant and humourous.

He

duced of that kind; one ſees they call the ſame party, Tory or Whig, alternately, according as they have adopted ſuch or ſuch principles. Mr. SMITH gives the name of Tory, to whoever oppoſes the court, let his principles be what they will. What is more extraordinary is, that Whig was for many years the diſtinguiſhing title, to ſignify thoſe who were of the popular party.

He first lays it down as an undeniable fact, that the Tories in general look better, and are of a stronger constitution than the Whigs; *either because they feed on more substantial food, and which agrees better with them, or because they don't impair their constitutions, so much as the Whigs, by conversing with lewd women.* These are the author's own words: "'Tis easy, "says he, to distinguish one who is descen- "ded from a race of ancestors, who have liv'd "on beef and pudding; from one whose father "and grandfather have spoiled their stomachs "by living on nothing but nice French dishes, "the one has abundance of flesh, and a cer- "tain plumpness that shew the strength of "his constitution and understanding; the "other on the contrary has always a pale mea- "gre aspect, that ought to make us fear his "understanding partakes of the imbecility of "his body. Achilles was fed with lion's "marrow, to make him strong and courage- "ous; the gravy of beef has the same effect "on the natives of this country. 'Twas the "nourishment of those brave Englishmen, "who gained so many, and such glorious "victories over the French. All other food "only tends to weaken the body, and dispose "the mind to that effeminacy, which a po- "litic minister knows how to make advan- "tage of. King CHARLES II. had very good "reasons for introducing French cookery "among us.

Mr.

Mr. SMITH next pretends, that the Tories have a more ſerious, maſculine and thoughtful air, than the other Engliſh; but then he has the honeſty to grant alſo, that moſt of them are of a more melancholic diſpoſition. As to the Whigs, he aſſures you, the greateſt part of them, eſpecially at court, have an effeminate look; and that in general they have a giddy-headed, volatile, thoughtleſs air; and in a word, the French air. You ſee the author gives us alſo a rub or two by the by.

As to the tone of voice, he ſays the Whigs have a ſoft and inſinuating one, and the Tories a lively and maſculine one. If you'll believe him, all is effeminate in the one, and maſculine in the other. He proceeds ſo far as even to ſay, that he can diſtinguiſh by the ſound of the voice only, a Tory of an ancient family, and who has not debaſed himſelf by marriage; one, for example, who is deſcended from a Tory in CROMWEL's time; for he is of opinion that the Tories are as ancient as the Engliſh conſtitution, and that all enemies to miniſters, in what age ſoever, were Tories. And, laſtly, he imagines thoſe are beſt, who are of Welch extraction.

The ſecond chapter treats of their manner of dreſſing; but as the Whigs imitate the Tories in this, when they have a mind to pleaſe the people, the author acknowledges they ought not to depend too much upon that. In St. James's-Park, in a morning, ſays mr. SMITH, you would take our young noblemen

for

for rationalEngliſhmen, and true Tories; but at night, you find them at the opera, powder'd, curl'd, and loaded with lace, and in ſhort, contemptible Whigs, as they really are. The reſt of this chapter muſt appear very inſipid to you who have not lived in England; but with mr. SMITH a long or bob-wig, a coat of ſuch or ſuch a faſhion, are matters of conſequence; all things are ſubjects for conjecture.

I paſs over alſo the three following chapters, as containing only ſuperficial remarks, or random gueſſes; and come to the fifth, the whole of which I will ſend you. 'Tis the moſt extraordinary and moſt important of the whole work; the title excites curioſity; which is this;

Obſervations to be made at an election feaſt, to know whether the candidate is a true Tory, and whether he may be relied on.

" You muſt obſerve with what air your " landlord receives you; if at entering the " room he takes you honeſtly by the hand, " and ſqueeſing it with all his might, gives " you a hearty ſhake, as our anceſtors uſed to " do; bleſs your ſtars, and ſay to yourſelf; " this is one of us: but if on the contrary he " makes you a very humble low bow, be a- " fraid of this foreign politeneſs, and take care " of yourſelf; you are in an enemy's country.

" You muſt next give attention to what " they ſet on the table; if ſoups, fricaſſes and " ſuch other ridiculous inventions of French " cookery, make their appearance there; the " perſon who entertains you, is certainly a

" Whig, tho' he proteſts the contrary ever ſo " ſolemnly. Thoſe of that party dare not eat " agreeably to their natural palate, but at their " tables follow the dictates of ſome eminent " glutton at Paris, and prefer a larded pullet, " to our roaſt gooſe and apple ſauce.

" If there is no plumb-pudding at the can- " didate's table, or if there is, and he does not " eat of it, 'tis another proof that he is a Whig. " *Tell me the company, and I'll tell you the man,* " is a certain maxim; *and tell me what you* " *eat, and I'll tell you what you think,* is ano- " ther as certain.

" If there be roaſt, whether it be butchers- " meat, tame or wild-fowl, if it does not " ſwim in butter, you may depend upon it, " he is not a Tory; a man of that party, " would never be guilty of ſo eſſential a fault, " for fear of diſobliging the palate of ſome " quacks in cookery, who find fault with eve- " ry thing in ours, that is not agreable to the " French mode.

" If he makes uſe of his fork, to put the " bits of meat into his mouth, and does not " take them up, ſauce and all with his knife, " as our forefathers always did; he is a man " ſpoil'd by cuſtom, and cannot be certainly " relied on.

" With regard to drink, that alſo furniſhes " us with as certain remarks. Strong liquors " give courage, and therefore the Tories love " them. You ought to be prejudic'd againſt " every man who prefers Bourdeaux-wine to

Port

" Port; 'tis certain he has not the intereſt of " his country at heart, becauſe the firſt of " thoſe wines comes from a country, where " the ballance of commerce is againſt us, and " we import the other from a country, where " on the contrary it is very much in our favour.

" If the candidate for member of parlia- " ment, ſhould go ſo far, as to chooſe to " drink Burgundy rather than Bourdeaux- " wine, he is a man that has entirely loſt the true " Engliſh taſte; and by that, gives the great- " eſt reaſon to believe, he has alſo loſt the " Engliſh way of thinking: the one is the " conſequence of the other. If a true Tory " had lived ten years in France, he would ne- " ver have been able to bring himſelf to like " the flavour of Burgundy, or the reliſh of a " Partridge.

" Laſtly, if the candidate likes Champagne " better than the * White-wines which we " import from Spain and Portugal, or make " in this iſland; there is no need of farther " examination, he is a diſguis'd Whig: and " let them ſay what they will in his favour, " conſtantly refuſe him your vote. They one " day, contrary to my opinion, choſe a man " that I miſtruſted, becauſe I had ſeen him " drink three glaſſes of Champagne; and ſix " months after he turned his coat, and went " over to the court party. There's no truſting " thoſe, who love a liquor ſo improper for our

* The author means thoſe ordinary wines, which the Engliſh call Mountain-wines.

" nation. They have no more ſolidity, than
" the froth of the liquor they are ſo fond of.

" 'Tis alſo proper to inform theEngliſh,who
" are honeſt and mean well to their country,
" of a cuſtom the Whigs have lately introdu-
" ced to their tables; I mean the nobility of
" that party, or very rich private gentlemen,
" who are ſilly enough to imitate them; and
" in general, all thoſe Engliſh, who have the
" moſt depraved appetite. The ſcandalous
" manner, in which the Whigs endeavour to
" eſtabliſh the cuſtoms and vices of foreign
" nations amongſt us, is very well known.
" The greateſt part of them, now a-days, drink
" their wine with ice, and this purely out of
" an air, as that is intirely a forreign taſte.
" And there are ſome of them who affect to
" do this, even in the month of December,
" becauſe 'tis the cuſtom of the hot-brained
" French to do ſo. I ſhall ſurpriſe our honeſt
" northern Engliſh, who know no county but
" their own, and have ſeen no city but York,
" much more, when I tell them, that they
" eat ice at ſome tables in London, as they do
" *Gooſeberry fool* at theirs.

" To what a height of corruption are we
" arrived! O times! O manners! And what
" would our virtuous anceſtors ſay to this for-
" reign luxury. This depravity is happily not
" yet introduced amongſt the wiſe Tories, and
" thoſe of that party, who are honeſt and ſin-
" cere, ſtill warm their wine before they drink
" it, as the true Engliſh have always done;

" which is a ſalutary cuſtom for the ſtomach. " The Chineſe alſo, a nation fam'd for their " wiſdom, eat cold, and drink hot.

" What moſt diſtinguiſhes the Tories from " the Whigs, is, that they drink much more " than the others; one may judge how a man " thinks of the government, by his manner of " drinking. A common Tory, drinks twice " as much as a Whig; a zealous Tory drinks " as much as a dozen of them together; and " there is not one of them, of the firſt claſs, " who is not able to drink, in large bumpers, " at an election feaſt, the healths of all thoſe " of his party, and all the curſes which they " then, according to cuſtom, beſtow on the " heads of the contrary party; and beſides " theſe, confuſion to the high church in ge- " neral, and damnation to all the lords ſpiritual " in particular.

" The laſt reflection, I have to make on this " ſubject, is, that every man, who preſſes a- " nother to drink, and does not drink himſelf, " is an enemy who endeavours to ſurpriſe him; " and thus many of the Whigs do. The o- " pen hearted and honeſt Tory, has no re- " courſe to ſuch ungenerous, mean tricks; he " is without deceit, without craft; and if ei- " ther the intereſt of his party, or common " civility requires him to make his gueſts " drunk, he himſelf firſt ſets the example they " ought to follow.

And this I think, ſir, is ſufficient to ſhew you what the intent of this work is. If the romantic

ſtrain of the author did not caution all ſenſible readers to diſtruſt his opinions; would it not be indeed very extraordinary, that a man, according as he is for or againſt the court, ſhould be more or leſs addicted to exceſs in eating and drinking? And if it were ſo, what might be the reaſons of this difference? Some pretend that the place of their education contributes ſomething to it, and that they drink more at one univerſity, than the other; but this reaſon would not appear ſatisfactory to me, ſuppoſing the thing were true. Thoſe who eſpouſe the one, or the other party, have been educated at the one, or the other univerſity, without diſtinction. And ſince one can make only bare conjectures on this fact, already doubtful in its own nature; cannot one ſuppoſe, that the regret of the antiminiſterial party, to ſee all their projects miſcarry; the deſpair to ſee thoſe of their adverſaries ſucceed; and in a word, the continual diſcontent in which they live, make all thoſe things requiſite for them, which alleviate uneaſineſs and chagrin? On the other hand, the partiſans of the court apply themſelves more to what is called ſtudying mankind, and gallantry; they converſe more with the ſex, they have a greater taſte for frequenting the playhouſe, the opera, and all thoſe places where 'tis not neceſſary to drink for amuſement.

However, I do not in the leaſt pretend here, either to criticiſe on the one, or make an encomium on the others. I ſhould be very cau-

tious

tious of daring to determine any thing on this ſubject; CATO, the great CATO, that firm republican, that virtuous Roman, after the example of Socrates, the wiſeſt man in Greece, often drank more than was conſiſtent with temperance; and Lucullus, who carried luxury to its higheſt pitch, was the honeſteſt man of all the ancients.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XXXVI.

To the Count of C**.

Of architecture in England; and the bad taſte of the Engliſh, and ridiculous taſte of the French in their ornaments and furniture.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

YOU are acquainted with the *Vitruvius Britannicus*; and as you are not only a maſter of the rules of all the arts, but have that exquiſite taſte, which is much ſuperior to the rules themſelves, becauſe 'tis the hidden principle of them; don't you think the author of that work has had all the remarkable buildings in England, deſign'd and engrav'd on purpoſe to ſhew us, that architecture is a ſcience, which is not yet naturaliſed here? It is one of thoſe that depend on taſte, and therefore may be ſtill a long time foreign in this iſland. 'Tis not that archi-

tecture is void of known principles and certain rules, ſome of them, founded on nature; as this, for example; *That the ſtrongeſt ought to ſupport the weakeſt*; and others ſucceſſively eſtabliſhed and unanimouſly agreed to, as the reſult of the experience of our predeceſſors: but the moſt difficult and moſt extenſive part of it, that of decoration, and the ornaments it is capable of receiving, taſte alone muſt give; and taſte gives nothing in this country.

Architecture is one of thoſe things, which moſt particularly indicate the magnificence of a nation; and from magnificence, we eaſily conclude grandure. Though we could only judge of the Romans, by the ruins which are left us of their ſtately amphitheatres, would not they nevertheleſs be the object of our admiration? All that hiſtory relates of the Ægyptians, makes leſs impreſſion on us, than thoſe vaſt pyramids, which have ſubſiſted in their country for ſo many ages. What an idea, will the front of the Louvre leave to poſterity, of the power of that monarch who erected it, and of the degree of perfection, to which the arts were carried, in his reign!

Italy, is the country of Europe, that has produc'd the moſt maſterpieces of modern architecture. The Engliſh have yet only the merit of having copied ſome of them. The * architect, who built their famous church of St. Paul, at London, has only reduced the plan

* Sir Chriſtopher Wren.

plan of St. Peter's at Rome, to two thirds of it's ſize; the proportions excepted, which he has very ill obſerved: and a man, who underſtands but little of architecture, may eaſily perceive, that throughout the whole, wherever he deviates from his model, he has committed the greateſt errors.

The greateſt part of the country houſes, for there are few at London, that deſerve to be ſpoke of, are alſo in the Italian taſte; but it has not been always juſtly applied. One of the firſt things an architect ſhould conſider, is the climate where he builds; what is proper for a country as hot, and where the air is as clear as that of Naples; is improper in a much colder climate, and where the ſky is not ſo ſerene. The Italians, in their houſes, ought to ſcreen themſelves from the exceſſive heat, the Engliſh, who do not ſee the ſun ſo often as they would, ought to admit it, as much as poſſible. A pleaſure-houſe for a garden at Rome, is not a model for a country-houſe, in the neighbourhood of London.

They pretend the Engliſh, who will paſs for men of taſte, do many things againſt the grain; they are forc'd in every thing to conſtrain their own taſte and affect a foreign one. They pay very dear, ſay they, to hear muſick that diſpleaſes them; their tables are covered with meats diſagreeable to their palates; they wear cloaths that are troubleſome to them, and live to houſes where they are not at their eaſe. This is not the only country where we find

men

men who are the dupes of this ſort of madneſs, who ſacrifice their eaſe to the faſhions of a genteel air, and real pleaſure to what is only the ſhadow of it. How muſt this folly make true philoſophers laugh!

The celebrated INIGO JONES, has adorned London with ſome edifices of taſte, and amongſt the reſt, with the magnificent Banqueting-houſe at Whitehall, one of the fineſt pieces of architecture in Europe. On the other hand my lord BURLINGTON, who has joined example to precept, by the fine houſe which he has built for himſelf at London, and ſome things which he has publiſhed concerning architecture; has endeavour'd to give his countrymen a taſte for it. But theſe models have not made the Engliſh architects more expert; for whenever they attempt to do any thing more than barely to copy, they erect nothing but heavy maſſes of ſtone, like that of Blenheim-caſtle, the plan and front of which you will find in the *Vitruvius Britannicus*.

The Engliſh alſo, in the ornaments of their buildings, very often affect a taſte that is perfectly childiſh. They have built for the queen in Richmond-park, a ſmall ſtructure to place her country library in; which they call Merlin's-cave. 'Tis only an octogon pavilion, with a Gothick arched roof; and has nothing in it anſwerable to the idea, it's name gives us of it. You find no other curioſity there, except that ſorcerer and ſome other figures in wax, as large as the life. So far from finding

any

any thing in this building that ſavours of enchantment and the magician's power, it is impoſſible to conceive any thing of a worſe taſte.

The Engliſh are not always happy in their inventions; but are unacquainted with the exactneſs of proportions, and elegancy of forms in every thing: and therefore ſucceed no better in the taſte of their furniture, than in that of the ornaments of their houſes. We regard the Italians as our maſters in the architecture and external ornaments of large buildings; but the French ſeem to underſtand the diſtribution and internal proportions, the beſt of any nation in Europe; and the bad taſte of the Engliſh particularly ſhews itſelf in theſe.

However, the love of truth does not permit me to flatter my countrymen in their faults. I ſhall be bold enough to own and condemn the pernicious effects of our natural levity. We now a-days in every thing that depends upon deſign, as well as in the productions of the underſtanding, begin to deviate from that noble ſimplicity which the great maſters of antiquity followed in all things; and ours have endeavour'd to imitate. 'Twas not for want of invention, that both the one and the others adopted this; and thoſe who affect to deviate from it, prove their bad taſte much more than the fruitfulneſs of theirs. Whatever they ſay, to hide their ignorance or want of capacity, 'tis much eaſier to follow our own humour, and tack ſcraps of verſes together, than to contrive a fine ſcene, and re-

repreſent nature truly in it. This ſeeming abundance is a real ſterility. He that has both a fruitful genius and fine taſte, thinks he ought to reject all ſuperfluous beauty. But in this ſort of riches as well as others, a man muſt be rich indeed, not to regret the loſs of thoſe, he has ill employed. A bungling deſigner invents ornaments of all forms, and crouds them on one another; a man of BOUCHARDON's genius, invents only noble ones, and diſtributes them with judgment. The Goths were as prodigal of them, as the Greeks avaricious; but the example of the laſt ſhews us, that the force of genius, and perfection of art, are to arrive at this happy ſimplicity.

I am certain, ſir, you ſee with regret, that we already affect in ſeveral inſtances to deviate from the taſte of LEWIS XIV's time; the golden age for learning and the elegant arts in France. Nothing is more monſtrous, as HORACE obſerves, than to couple together beings of different natures; and yet 'tis what many of our artiſts at this time glory in doing. A cupid is the contraſt of a dragon; and a ſhell, of a bat's wing; they no longer obſerve any order, any probability, in their productions. They heap corniſhes, baſes, columns, caſcades, ruſhes and rocks, in a confuſed manner, one upon another; and in ſome corner of this chaos, they will place a cupid in a great fright, and have a feſtoon of flowers above the whole. And this is what they call deſigns of a new taſte. Thus by going be-

yond

yond the due limits, we are returned to the Gothick barbarity. Perhaps there are things, where too much ſymmetry is a fault, but 'tis commonly a greater, to obſerve none; there ſhould always be a ſymmetry in the whole maſs, tho' not in all it's parts. 'Tis indiſpenſably neceſſary in architecture. A building, of whatſoever ſort, is a whole compos'd of parts, that ought to correſpond with each other; and 'tis in the ornaments we ſhould uſe variety. Statues placed facing each other in a niche, have a bad effect, if they do not appear very nearly of the ſame ſize; but they offend the eye as much, if their attitudes are exactly the ſame. Thus in a flower-garden; the borders, both in their middles, and at their ends which anſwer to each other, ſhould have the ſame proportions; but to obſerve exactly the ſame regularity, in the diſpoſition of every one of the flowers, which are planted there to vary the proſpect, would be to affect a ſymmetry equally childiſh and inſipid. But how far are we at preſent, with regard to ornaments, from this defect! We will have nothing that looks like ſymmetry. If they adorn the frontiſpiece of a houſe, with the arms of the perſon who built it; they place the eſcutcheon in a diagonal line, with the coronet on one ſide of it, ſo that it looks if it were going to fall down. They forſake the perpendicular and horizontal lines as much as poſſible; and place nothing now, either upright or level.

Our architects in time paſt were too wiſe to take thoſe liberties, which the moderns think ſo ingenious. In this more adventurous age, they would have every thing make a ſhew, and turn things topſy-turvy in ſuch a manner, that I am afraid this ill taſte proves their heads are turn'd. Our ſenſible artiſts, often bluſh at things they are obliged to do; but the torrent bears them down, and they are forced to do like the reſt, to get employment. They aſk them for things of the new faſhion; of thoſe ſhapes, which bear no reſemblance to any thing; and they let them have them.

This faſhion is moſt viſible in that part of our furniture, which is deſigned chiefly for ornaments; and indeed the taſte which admits of every thing at this time, runs perhaps more ridiculous lengths than ever it did. What do thoſe pendulum-clocks, ſo much in faſhion, reſemble; which have neither baſis nor corbel, but ſeem to ſpring out of the wainſcot, to which they are faſten'd? Thoſe ſtags, dogs, huntſmen, or Chineſe figures, which they diſpoſe in ſo odd a manner about the dial-plate; are they it's natural ornaments? Thoſe cartridges, whether at the top, the bottom, or on the ſides, which have nothing to anſwer them; are they really of a good taſte? A ſhape that is, as we may ſay, undetermined, and unlike all known ſhapes, is ſo far from being pleaſing; that we can't conceive any thing elegant, which is not terminated, and does not reſemble ſomething. There is in all

ſorts

ſorts of things, a *Right*, without which there can be no beauty; and 'tis the ſenſe of this *Right*, that conſtitutes taſte.

What is there more ridiculous, than varniſhing the braſſes, which are placed for ornament in a chimney? What more abſurd, than faſtening pagods of China-ware to them? Thus by varying ſhapes too much, we run into extravagance; and by crouding too much riches into ornaments, fall into foppery. We hardly avoid one exceſs before we are guilty of a greater. Nothing is ſo difficult as to eradicate bad taſte: 'tis a hydra with many heads, one of which you have no ſooner cut off, but another ſprings up. There are ſome happy mortals, who by ſuperior ſtrength compaſs the deſtruction of it. Thus MOLIERE, in his time, by the beauty of his plays, forc'd the people to abandon the ſilly jeſts, playing with words and double-meanings to which they were accuſtomed. Thus the *Puget* of our time, may, by the productions of an invention as wiſe as fruitful, and an exquiſite judgment, reſtore the true taſte to deſign, by recalling us to beautiful nature; and make every thing, that ignorance and bad taſte has lately produced, fall into contempt. That of this time, ſir, is ſo deprav'd, that I do not think it can continue much longer; and the attention and encouragement which you give to arts, muſt neceſſarily haſten its fall.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXVII.

To Abbé OLIVET.

Of the chicanery of the Engliſh law, both in civil and criminal caſes.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

IN all civiliz'd countries, the defence of the diſtreſſed, has always fallen under the cognizance of eloquence; 'tis its duty to implore the protection of the laws, againſt the oppreſſion of injuſtice; but how ſhall it lend its voice to the widow and the orphan here, when the moſt important intereſts of the ſtate have ſo much difficulty to move it?

The art of oratory, in the different courts of juſtice in Weſtminſter-hall, is confin'd much more frequently than in ours, to captious ſubtilities and chicanery: with us, indeed, this monſter, equally enemy both to good ſenſe and honeſty, appears every day at the bar, in a ſquare cap and long robe; with an impudence aſſumed from impunity: and although true eloquence makes its appearance at it but ſeldom, 'tis nevertheleſs not entirely a ſtranger there. It now and then raiſes its voice in our courts, and makes its power be felt. We have at this time

time *Le Normans*, *Cochins*, *Aubris*, who ſtill ſupport its glory there; and do no leſs honour to our nation, than to the noble profeſſion they exerciſe with ſo much renown.

Chicanry, which went into England with the Romans and their laws, muſt have found as happy a diſpoſition in the minds of the Engliſh, as in thoſe of the Normans themſelves. Its power is as firmly eſtabliſh'd in this country, as ever it was in its native one. England is doubtleſs it's greateſt and moſt glorious conqueſt. From the time that chicanery eſtabliſhed its throne, in the different courts in Weſtminſter hall; it has reign'd with a deſpotic ſway, without interruption or rival. Its empire is perhaps more firmly eſtabliſhed, and certainly more lik'd by the nation, than the preſent government ſeems to be. The king has not twenty thouſand troops to make the laws obeyed, which is doubtleſs the intent of the ſtanding army, heretofore unknown to the Engliſh. Chicanry has fifty thouſand lawyers to ſupport its power, and perpetuate its reign. They call them *the army of the law*; and ſome even make the number of them amount to an hundred thouſand. The author of a ſmall tract upon commerce, pretends there are more of them in England, than in all the reſt of Europe; and that they are poſſeſſed of a fourth part of the lands of the nation. As younger brothers in England are reduc'd to live on their portions, they willingly embrace the profeſſion of a barriſter at law, becauſe 'tis one of the moſt lucrative.

The barriſters at Weſtminſterhall diſpute more about the letter of the law, than the juſtice of their cauſe. They raiſe more difficulties about the meaning of the words, which ought to determine the judges, than they give attention to the examination of the facts, controverted by the parties. And as villains frequently get off, by the moſt frivolous and childiſh ſubtilties, the lawyers apply themſelves daily to invent new ones; this is the continual ſtudy of the great number of inns of court at London, which, properly ſpeaking, are only ſeminaries of chicanry. By their artifices, juſtice is overburthen'd with ſuch a heap of laws, that 'tis become an oppreſſion to thoſe who have recourſe to it; and who becauſe they ſuffer by it, ought rather to be called Patients, than Clients, as an author of this nation has very juſtly obſerved.

Such diſpoſitions in the laws, in the judges, and in the lawyers, are abſolutely contrary to eloquence; and 'tis as impoſſible it ſhould ever be eſtabliſhed among the barriſters at Weſtminſter, as among the attornies of the Chatelet * at Paris.

To confirm you in the idea I here give you, of the Engliſh law; I'll tell you an extraordinary fact which mr. POPE mentions in † his moral Epiſtles.

Some years ſince a villain of the firſt rank, amaſſed very conſiderable riches by the moſt iniquitous means. Firſt, by forging a falſe conveyance

* There are two *Chatelets* at Paris, the great and little. They are both priſons. In the great is held a court of judicature.

† See Book II. Epiſt. iii.

veyance of a very good eſtate to himſelf. The fact proved, he was condemn'd to have his noſe ſlit, and ears cut off in the pillory. The other means he made uſe of to increaſe his wealth, and for which he was proſecuted at the ſame time, was this; he made a falſe will, by which he diſinherited a brother, and gave the inheritance to himſelf. For this laſt villany the court of Chancery condemn'd him to perpetual impriſonment, where he enjoyed thoſe ill gotten goods, 'till his death; and then diſpoſed of them, as his own property, in favour of his own relations. In France, beſides the corporal puniſhment, the goods this wretch had ſeiz'd on, without any other title than that of his villany, would have been reſtored to their true proprietors; but the law is quite different in England, and the counſellors at London will maintain in their pleadings, that the puniſhment impos'd for ſuch crimes, becomes a lawful title of acquiſition, with regard to the perſon who has committed them. 'Tis juſt as if this wretch had purchaſed theſe eſtates, at the price of the puniſhments he was condemn'd to ſuffer. Thus if any one chooſes rather to acquire an eſtate of ten thouſand pounds a year, than to preſerve his noſe or his ears; as we naturally ſuppoſe all mean ſouls, as thoſe of villains are, would: juſtice teaches him the way to do it, and aſſures him the quiet poſſeſſion of it. What ſhameful playing with juſtice, in ſo weighty a matter! And what abuſe of law, in ſo wiſe a nation! Is not

this favouring vice, and giving the cunning of villany, ſure means to triumph over the plain dealing of innocence?

The proceedings againſt criminals in England are neither more ſerious, nor better regulated: they are treated in ſuch a manner here, that to ſay nothing more, would ſurpriſe all the reſt of the world. But that you may yourſelf be able to judge of the ſubterfuges, by which chicanery can ſcreen a criminal from the ſeverity of juſtice; here is what I have found in the tryal of the famous CHRISTOPHER LAYER, ſo well known by the news-papers of that time; who was tryed for high treaſon, before the houſe of lords in 1722.

"As to the ſecond exception, (ſaid the "counſel for the priſoner) that, in relation "to *Chriſtopherus* [writ with an *e*, whereas "it ſhould be *Chriſtophorus* with an *o*] we "ſubmit it to your lordſhip if that be not ex"preſsly within the defects mentioned in the "act of parliament miſwriting, miſpelling, "falſe and improper Latin; nay, whether it "is not ſubject to cenſure under each of theſe "four heads.

"My lord, it was impoſſible to bring all "my authorities, upon this point, along with "me; but I have here in court ſeveral of the "beſt dictionaries and lexicons, which ſhew "the true word to be *Chriſtophorus*: and I "believe the gentlemen of the other ſide can't "produce one inſtance in any authentic book "either Greek or Latin, but it is always ſpelt "with an *o* and not with an *e*. It it *Chriſto-*

"*phorus*

" *phorus* from πεφόρα, the *Preteritum medium*
" of the Greek verb φέρω; and the rules of
" etymology and formation of Greek verbals
" evince that it muſt be ſo, and cannot be o-
" therwiſe: and by all the Latin dictionaries,
" the Latin word for *Chriſtopher* is *Chriſtophorus*.

" My lord, I hope your lordſhip will par-
" don me; here is the life of a man concern'd:
" and as I would not willingly offer any thing
" to your lordſhip that in the like caſes hath
" been over-ruled; ſo neither would I omit
" any thing that may be material for the pri-
" ſoner, whoſe defence the court has intruſted
" us with: therefore I will go on to the other
" objections that we think to be improper La-
" tin; *compaſſavit*, *imaginatus fuit*, *et inten-*
" *debat*. Theſe are the words, I don't know
" whether this Latin will go down in Weſt-
" minſter-hall, but I am ſatisfied it would not
" in Weſtminſter-ſchool.

" Here is the *et intendebat*, *et* a conjuncti-
" on copulative between verbs in ſeveral tenſes;
" here is *compaſſavit* the preterperfect tenſe,
" *imaginatus fuit* the preterperfect tenſe, and
" *intendebat* the preterimperfect tenſe. Why
" ſhould not the laſt verb have been put into
" the preterperfect tenſe, according to the rules
" of claſſical Latin, as well as the two former?
" Therefore, &c.

Can one ſeriouſly hear ſuch diſcuſſions of inſignificant grammatical niceties, in an affair of

* Notwithſtanding the chicanry and addreſs of his counſel, this unhappy wretch was condemn'd to die for high treaſon. His tryal was printed at London, *in Folio*, 1722; with that of Dr Atterbury, Biſhop of Rocheſter, who died at Paris, in 1731.

ſuch importance, and where the life of a man is in queſtion? what would a people the leaſt civiliz'd, nay even the ſavages of America think, of ſuch an extraordinary form of juſtice? After all, is it not as if the counſellor had ſaid; the priſoner, whoſe defence is committed to me, may be a traytor to his country, but his proſecutors are guilty of blunders, contrary to the rules of the Latin grammar; for which reaſon, I demand that he be ſet at liberty, tho' his crime enormous as it is, go unpuniſh'd. Should we dare to give the name of law, to what would authorize ſuch reaſoning? Is MOLIERE'S Araminta, who turns MARTINA out of doors, becauſe the poor country girl did not ſpeak good French, more ridiculous than the counſellor, who would ſcreen a criminal, becauſe his accuſers ſpeak bad Latin?

I know what reply may be made me, and that the counſellors in this, only act according to law; and I know that this alſo, ſtrange as it appears, has nevertheleſs a very laudable object, which is; to give an innocent perſon more means to defend himſelf, and at all events to ſpare the lives of men as much as poſſible. But the intention of moſt laws is always good; 'tis the execution of them ſhews their diſadvantage, or utility. Thoſe only do honour to the legiſlators, which really contribute to the happineſs and ſupport of ſociety. Laws are made to puniſh thoſe who diſturb its order;

order; the ſubtilty of lawyers encourages them.

'Tis a maxim in all countries and of all ages, that the repoſe of ſociety requires crimes ſhould be puniſh'd; and is not the opening a way for criminals to eſcape the ſeverity of juſtice, by ſuch ſubterfuges, authorizing them? Let the laws require the ſtrongeſt proof of crimes, let the counſellor make the moſt of every circumſtance, that can extenuate them; and welcome; 'tis ſufficient to have humanity enough, to receive favourably whatever tends to preſerve the lives of our fellow-ſubjects, and ſave the miſerable, except *reaſons for exception*, drawn from the miſtakes a magiſtrate may commit.

As to laws, they ought equally to prevent innocence being oppreſs'd, and crimes going unpuniſh'd. The proſecution of an Engliſhman in Latin, is alſo a remnant of the barbarity of the laſt age; which the parliament has at laſt taken cognizance of. In the latter years of the reign of GEORGE I, it was enacted; that public acts of all ſorts, ſhould for the future be writ in the Engliſh language. 'Tis ſurpriſing the Engliſh were ſo long before they thought of ſo eaſy a way to pare the nails of chicanry: but what reforms are ſtill neceſſary to be made, to perfect their law! 'Tis as dangerous to permit barriſters to elude the intention of laws, as it would be to leave the meaning of them to be interpreted by judges. The

laſt would make them arbitrary, the firſt make them uſeleſs.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XXXVIII.

To Monſieur DE BUFFONS;

Of the riches of the Engliſh farmers, and the difference between them and the French.

STAMFORD, &c.

SIR,

'TIS in the country you perceive moſt, the difference there is between France and England; one might almoſt ſay, that luxury reigns as much in the country in England, as it does in the cities in France. The Engliſh farmer is rich, and enjoys all the conveniences of life in abundance: if he labours for the merchant, he partakes, as well as the reſt of his countrymen, of the advantages of commerce. In ſeveral parts of England, a farmer's ſervant drinks his tea, before he goes to plow.

The wiſdom of the Engliſh government, is to be juſtly praiſed for taking ſuch particular care of the happineſs of this claſs of men, which

which we ought to regard as the firſt, becauſe 'tis they who ſubſiſt all the reſt. A country where the farmer is in eaſy circumſtances, muſt be a rich country. The cultivation of the land, and the welfare of thoſe employed in it, ſhould be the principal object of the legiſlative power. 'Tis unreaſonable that he who ſows, ſhould reap only for others, and that he who labours, ſhould not enjoy the fruits of his labour. Let the maxims, dictated by hard-heartedneſs to the miſerable, which is but too often the concomitant of luxury and opulence, and adopted by bad policy, be what they will; lands are always better cultivated, in proportion as the farmers are richer: at leaſt, certain it is, thoſe who are ill fed, are not able to endure the fatigue of labour.

Our neighbours, in this reſpect, act upon quite different principles; humanity dictates them, and experience ſhews their wiſdom. The care with which the country is cultivated with them, is the conſequence of the plenty, in which the farmer lives; and if he is truly, commonly ſpeaking, more robuſt here, than in France, 'tis perhaps becauſe he is better fed. The fruits of his labour, are not only ſufficient for his neceſſities, but alſo enable him to procure that ſort of ſuperfluity, which makes what we term, *the pleaſure of life*; and which varies according to mens different conditions, all of which we may ſay, have their luxuries. In England, as well as in Holland, the villages are neater and better built, than in

France;

France; every thing in them declares the riches of the inhabitants. One perceives by the houſes of the Engliſh farmers, that they are in eaſy circumſtances enough, to have a taſte for neatneſs, and that they have leiſure time enough to ſatisfy it. I have found them every where well cloathed. They never go out in the winter, without a riding-coat. Their wives and daughters not only dreſs, but adorn themſelves. In the winter, they wear ſhort cloth-cloaks, to defend themſelves from the cold; and ſtraw-hats, in the ſummer, to guard themſelves from the heat of the ſun. All the Engliſh women have fine complexions, even thoſe in the country, are not without; and the eaſe they enjoy, permits them to take care of them. A young country girl, in other countries, is a meer peaſant; here, by the neatneſs of her dreſs, and genteelneſs of her perſon, you would take her for a ſhepherdeſs in one of our romances. I know provinces in France, where there is no difference between the man and his wife, but the petty coat; ſome of them alſo labour as much, eſpecially in the country, where they participate with them the fatiguing labour of the plow. We very rarely ſee the Engliſh women employ'd in laborious works.

The effects of this wiſe œconomy are viſible in every thing in the country, even in their animals; and the earth repays the huſbandman with uſury, what it coſts him to have good horſes, and feed them well. If he car-

ries

ries his grain to market, he has one particularly for his own riding. But 'tis at horſe-races eſpecially that we ſee proofs of the comfortable lives the Engliſh farmers lead. There are none where you don't ſee two thouſand countrymen, moſt of which have their wife, daughter or miſtreſs behind them; and you often ſee great fat farmers wives galloping there, who are happy enough to have horſes able to carry them. People never run after diverſions, except when their family affairs don't require their preſence at home.

'Tis pity this plenty which the Engliſh farmer enjoys, ſhould make him ſo proud and inſolent. He does not only diſpute the road with thoſe, whom the order of ſociety has made his ſuperiors, but ſometimes joſtles and inſults them, for his pleaſure. Whoever has forty ſhillings a year eſtate, gives his vote at elections for members of parliament; an Engliſh farmer is very proud of this privilege, and thinks more of making his advantage, than a good uſe of it. How happy would the Engliſh people be, if they had a right idea of all their advantages! But it does not appear that they are ſenſible of their value; for rich as they are, they are not the leſs venal for it. They do not reflect, that in making ſo bad a uſe of this privilege, they run the riſque of looſing it; and that thoſe who buy their votes, muſt naturally ſell their own. Yet nevertheleſs, he ſells his vote; and inſtead of giving it to the honeſteſt man in the county,

gives

gives it to him, who gives him moſt beer. As the farmers live more comfortably here, than in many other countries; they are more addicted to drink here, than any where elſe. Nothing is ſo frequent as drunkeneſs among the common people of England. This vice is ſo habitual to ſome of them, that it deprives them of all other conſiderations; even that of death itſelf. Every body knows, that thoſe unhappy wretches who are condemn'd to ſuffer the ſeverity of juſtice; die contentedly, provided they die drunk. I'll tell you what happened ſome years ſince at Lincoln, a conſiderable large city, in this neighbourhood. Five or ſix wretches lay in the priſon there, under ſentence of death, for robbing on the highway: two days, before that of their execution, they found means to get out of the place in which they were confined, by breaking a hole through the wall; but unhappily for them, the place they got into, when eſcap'd out of the dungeon, was a cellar. They were heated with working, and finding good beer, drank ſo plentifully of it, that they were all found drunk in the cellar the next morning.

However, in the midſt of this plenty, we eaſily perceive that the farmer is not ſo gay here, as in France; ſo that he may perhaps be richer, without being happier. The Engliſh of all ranks have that melancholy air, which makes part of their national character. The farmers here, ſhew very little mirth, e-

ven in their drunkeneſs; whereas in France, the farmers in ſeveral provinces drink nothing but water, and yet are as gay as poſſible. The ſhepherd conducting his flock, the plowman leaning at his plow, the artificer in the midſt of his work, even the moſt laborious; in our country, every body ſings: whether it be that the greateſt part of them are inſenſible of the toils of their condition, or that they only ſing to alleviate them, I ſhall not examine; but they certainly either by conſtitution or reflection, take the wiſeſt courſe.

The people in France are of a mild diſpoſition, and ſatisfied with a little; they are of all Europeans the beſt form'd for happineſs, and I think their moderation proves, they very much deſerve it. HENRY IV, who knew this, and admired it; as ſoon as ever he had eſtabliſh'd peace in his kingdom, found there was a neceſſity to eaſe the country. He, as wiſe a politician as a good prince; deſir'd thoſe who cultivated the earth, ſhould reap the fruits of it without bitterneſs. Death depriv'd France of him too ſoon. I wiſh a king, who loves his ſubjects, as much as the wiſe monarch under whoſe government we live, could execute this project; ſo worthy of one of his anceſtors, who called himſelf the father of his people.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXIX.

To Mr. DU CLOS,

Member of the Academy of Inſcriptions and Belles Lettres.

Of the favourable reception the works of MILTON, POPE *and* SWIFT, *have met with in France; and obſervations on* SHAKESPEAR'S *tragedy of* JULIUS CÆSAR, *&c.*

STAMFORD, &c.

SIR,

WE have had the works of various Engliſh authors publiſhed within theſe few years, which have been very favourably receiv'd by us. The tranſlator of MILTON, who has given the ſublimity of that poet, with as much force and elevation of ſtyle as proſe admits of, at leaſt in our language, has made us admire *Paradiſe loſt:* mr. POPE's two *Eſſays*, which Abbé RESNEL has ſo happily tranſlated into French verſe, have receiv'd the applauſe they deſerve; we have given a kind reception to all the works of Dr. SWIFT, that have been tranſlated. But as to the Engliſh plays, which you would be glad to be acquainted with; the greateſt part of them would find

find difficulty to ſucceed on our ſtage. The Engliſh tragedies are as contrary to our taſte, as their comedies are to our manners. It would be very difficult even to give extracts out of them, in the taſte of thoſe which father BRUMOY has given of the Greek theatre. And tho' ſuch an undertaking, might give ſatisfaction to men of learning: yet I doubt whether there would be any thing in it agreeable to the generality of mankind.

The firſt Engliſh dramatic writer, SHAKESPEAR, is without doubt, ſir, a great poet; ſome beauties of his works, which have been tranſlated into our language, are a proof of it: but intire tranſlations, or literal extracts, of his beſt works, would do much prejudice to his reputation in France. Perhaps, in what is fine in his works, he does not yield to any author ancient or modern; 'tis pity he ſo often falls into what is low and childiſh. We ſhould be as much diſpleaſed to read one of his tragedies quite through, as we ſhould have pleaſure to ſee an extract out of it. The admirable productions of his genius, are a perpetual contraſt to thoſe of his bad taſte; at the concluſion of one of the fineſt ſcenes, you muſt expect ſomething exceſſively ridiculous. In favour of theſe fine paſſages, the Engliſh pardon him for all the traſh which his works are full of; we ſhould not be ſo indulgent. Some dull ſcenes in CORNEILLE, prevent ſeveral of his plays being acted, in which there are many fine ones.

ones. *Sertorius* and *Otho* are tragedies, which we may look on as baniſhed from the ſtage.

The Engliſh admire SHAKESPEAR extravagantly; ſhould he be publiſhed in French, with all the merit he can have in his own language, we ſhould abate much of the praiſe they beſtow on him, and his admirers would never forgive us. We ſhould be juſtly diſpleaſed to ſee the force and ſublimity of the great CORNEILLE, continually joyn'd with low and trivial comick, puns, playing with words, and all the pitiful jeſts of our ancient tragedies, on the myſteries of our Saviour's paſſion.

I will content myſelf with giving you an example; 'tis a ſcene in the third act of his tragedy of JULIUS CÆSAR, where the genius of Shakeſpear raiſes itſelf as high, and falls as low, as poſſible. The celebrated mr. VOLTAIRE has already ſhewn the meaning of it; but that you may be the better able to judge of the author himſelf, I propoſe to give you his own words.

BRUTUS.

" Romans, countrymen and friends, ! hear
" me for my cauſe; and be ſilent, that you
" may hear. Believe me for mine honour, and
" have reſpect to mine honour, that you may
" believe. Cenſure me in your wiſdom, and
" awake your ſenſes that you may the better
" judge. If there be any in this aſſembly, any
" dear friend of CÆSAR's, to him I ſay, that
" BRUTUS's love to CÆSAR, was no leſs than

" his

" his. If then that friend demand, why
" Brutus roſe againſt Cæſar, this is my
" anſwer; not that I loved Cæſar leſs, but
" that I lov'd Rome more. Had you rather
" Cæſar were living, to die all ſlaves; than
" that Cæſar were dead, to live all freemen?
" As Cæſar lov'd me, I weep for him; as he
" was fortunate, I rejoyce at it; as he was va-
" liant, I honour him; but as he was ambiti-
" ous, I ſlew him. There are tears for his
" love, joy for his fortune, honour for his va-
" lour, and death for his ambition. Who's
" here ſo baſe that would be a bond-man? If
" any, ſpeak; for him have I offended.
" Who is here ſo rude, that would not be a
" Roman? If any, ſpeak; for him have I of-
" fended. Who is here ſo vile, that will not
" love his country? If any, ſpeak; for him have
" I offended.---I pauſe for a reply----

The People.

" None, BRUTUS, none.

BRUTUS.

" Then none have I offended---I have
" done no more to Cæſar, than you ſhall
" do to Brutus. The queſtion of his death
" is inroll'd in the capitol; his glory not exte-
" nuated, wherein he was worthy; nor his of-
" fences enforc'd, for which he ſuffered death.

Enter MARK ANTHONY with CÆSAR's [Body.

" Here comes his body, mourn'd by Mark
" Anthony: who though he had no hand in
" his death, ſhall receive the benefit of his

" dying, a place in the common-wealth; as " which of you ſhall not? With this I de- " part, that as I ſlew my beſt lover, for the " good of Rome, I have the ſame dagger for " myſelf, when it ſhall pleaſe my country to " need my death.

Then ANTHONY ſpeaks, and deſtroys the effects of this harangue, by another as pathetick. This act, in which there are theſe two maſter-peices, concludes with the loweſt and moſt ridiculous comick. Anthony has no ſooner inſpir'd the people with an eagerneſs to revenge Cæſar's death, but a new perſon appears on the ſtage. The people throng eagerly about him, aſk him his name, whither he is going, where he dwells, and if he is a married man, or a batchelor He tells them, his name is Cinna; and the people immediately cry out: *Tear him to pieces, he's a conſpirator.* The poor wretch anſwers in a great fright, *I am Cinna the poet*: *I am Cinna the poet.* That ſignifies nothing: Replies the populace, *tear him for his bad verſes.* Thus you ſee how all SHAKESPEAR'S tragick commonly ends, and how all his plays are variegated with pathetick ſcenes, and jocoſe ones.

He changes the fourth act of the ſame play to the camp at Sardis. Brutus there reproaches Caſſius with his avarice, not with a ſevere tone, but like a porter: and while theſe two generals are employed in the moſt weighty concerns; another poet comes in and interrupts

terrupts them, only to be treated like a ſcoundrel, and kick'd out again.

In the fifth act, the ſcene is at Philippi. Before the battle is fought, there is a parley between Brutus and Caſſius on one ſide, and Octavius and Anthony on the other. By the groſſneſs of the abuſive language they give each other, at this interview; one can't take them for Romans: and indeed you frequently diſcover the ſtyle of the author's godfather and godmother, in the perſons SHAKESPEAR has introduc'd upon the ſtage. This poet, who paints nature without choice, does not heſitate to make Cæſar appear in his night-cap; by which you ſee how much he muſt degrade him, if 'tis true; that *no hero wears a night-gown.* In ſome of his plays, he makes his appear in deſhabille; and ſometimes he even repreſents them drunk.

Beſides this, moſt of his works are neither tragedies, nor comedies; but what the Engliſh call *Hiſtorical Plays:* that is to ſay, the hiſtory of ſome prince put into dialogue, and diverſify'd with the loweſt buffoonry. Thoſe who have patience enough to ſwallow the tireſomeneſs which reading them muſt occaſion, are indemnify'd for it by the fine paſſages, which are here and there met with; for as SHAKESPEAR was a man of genius, the very worſt of his plays preſerves that character. His comick, always original, is ſometimes happy. You find here and there exceeding good jeſts; but very often the actor's Tun-belly,

or Great Hat, make moſt of the comic in his part. Falſtaff, ſo famous on the Engliſh ſtage, is commonly ſpeaking, a buffoon like Dom Japhet d' Arménie; except that this talks of nothing but empires and crowns, and the other of cutting purſes, and robbing paſſengers.

With regard to ſtyle, 'tis that which diſtinguiſhes him moſt from the other poets of his nation; he excells in that. He paints every thing he expreſſes in the moſt lively colours. He enlivens whatever he ſays. He ſpeaks, if I may be allowed to ſay ſo, a language peculiar to himſelf; which is the reaſon 'tis ſo difficult to tranſlate him. It muſt however be acknowledg'd, that as his expreſſions are ſometimes ſublime, ſo he often runs into bombaſt. Thus, in this play of *Julius Cæſar*, PORTIA, the wife of BRUTUS, complains to him, that he hides things from her, and aſks *if ſhe dwells but in the ſuburbs of his good pleaſure?* Would you imagine this ridiculous phraſe could proceed from the author of the harangue you have juſt read?

On the other hand, I cannot omit a paſſage in this tragedy, which, in my opinion, ſhews as much delicacy of wit, as the diſcourſe of BRUTUS does elevation of ſtyle. DECIMUS ſays, ſpeaking of CÆSAR:

" ----------He loves to hear
" That unicorns may be betray'd with trees,
" And bears with glaſſes, elephants with holes,
" Lions with toils, and men with flatterers:
" But when I tell him he hates flatterers,
" He ſays he does; being then moſt flattered.

What-

Whatever wit and imagination are in SHAKESPEAR, none but thoſe who read him in Engliſh, can rightly diſcover them. He can't be tranſlated, without mutilating him in every page; and when he is mutilated, 'tis no longer himſelf.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XL.

To the Duke of NIVERNOIS.

Of mr. WALLER. *The Engliſh authors as much addicted to flattery as the French.*

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD DUKE,

YOU deſire me to inform you who that WALLER was, whom St. Evremond ſpeaks of with ſuch commendation. He is one of thoſe authors, to whom Engliſh poetry has the greateſt obligations. He is the firſt poet of that nation, who conſulted harmony, in the placing of his words, and follow'd taſte in the choice of his ideas. He is as genteel, and more natural than VOITURE; has as much life, and is more correct than CHAULIEU. He is in the opinion of criticks, the moſt

amiable and correcteſt of all the Engliſh poets.

I will give you a ſpecimen of the taſte which his works are full of; 'tis a ſmall piece, which he wrote for the beautiful counteſs of SUNDERLAND, whom he was in love with.

The ſtory of PHOEBUS *and* DAPHNE *applied.*

THIRSIS, a youth of the inſpired train,
Fair SACHARISSA lov'd, but lov'd in vain:
Like PHOEBUS ſung the no leſs am'rous boy;
Like DAPHNE ſhe as lovely and as coy:
With numbers he the flying nymph purſues,
With numbers ſuch as PHOEBUS ſelf might uſe.
Such is the chace, when love and fancy leads,
O'er craggy mountains, or thro' flow'ry meads;
Invok'd to teſtify the lover's care,
Or form ſome image of his cruel fair:
Urg'd with his fury like a wounded deer,
O'er theſe he fled, and now approaching near,
Had reach'd the nymph with his harmonious lay,
Whom all his charms cou'd not incline to ſtay;
Yet what he ſung in his immortal ſtrain,
Though unſucceſsful, was not ſung in vain:
All but the nymph, that ſhould redreſs his wrong,
Attend his paſſion, and reprove his ſong.

Like

Like PHOEBUS thus, acquiring unſought praiſe,
He catch'd at love, and fill'd his arms with bays.

Among the poets which we have at this time in France, I know one who could give this piece all the beauties of the original; and who, indeed, with regard to genius, perfectly reſembles WALLER. He that I ſpeak of, as eminent for his birth as for his genius, has had anceſtors, who, like himſelf, have thought it an honour to cultivate this lovely ſcience. 'Tis the poet of our age, whoſe verſes abound moſt with noble ſentiments and delicacy. Can't you gueſs him?

CLARENDON makes great encomiums on WALLER's honeſty, but if he was a man of probity, he was of a timorous diſpoſition. He chang'd his manner of thinking according to times and circumſtances. There are few poets who have flatter'd their ſovereigns ſo much; and this defect is the more conſpicuous in him, as there are perhaps few, who have liv'd under the government of ſo many different princes. In his works, JAMES I, is the greateſt of kings; his ſon CHARLES who ſucceeds him, immediately ſurpaſſes him: and CROMWELL is greater than either of them. CHARLES II, is no ſooner re-eſtabliſh'd on the throne, than he eclipſes the protector; and is himſelf afterwards eclips'd by his brother JAMES II. Laſtly, according to him; *The prince on the throne, is always the greateſt.*

How much do theſe panegyricks, which are ſo contradictory to each other, degrade their author? This will diſgrace WALLER to all poſterity. They will blame the mean and mercenary uſe he made of his fine talent, as much as they will praiſe it. And thus, at this time, the pomp of LUCAN's verſe, only ſets the meaneſs of his ſoul, in a clearer light. We can't, without indignation, read the extravagant praiſes he has laviſh'd on NERO; which, nevertheleſs, did not prevent his falling a victim to that monſter.

You ſee the Engliſh poets are to blame, in charging ours with flattery, as a vice peculiar to them. Perhaps, the celebrated DRYDEN, ROWE, ADDISON, and Dr. GARTH, have carry'd it farther, than any writer of what nation ſoever. Notwithſtanding the praiſe the Engliſh beſtow on this laſt author, on account of his *diſpenſary*, which is only an imitation of the *Lutrin*; he has not ſurpaſſed BOILEAU except in exaggerating the praiſes, he has copied from him, to celebrate king WILLIAM. This is what he ſays of that prince, who ſhew'd all Europe his ambition, as well as the great qualities join'd with it.

Some princes claims from devaſtations ſpring,
He condeſcends in pity to be king.

Where ſhall we find examples of groſſer flattery? Whether it be, that we too readily believe what good the Engliſh ſay of themſelves; or that thoſe of us who have writ on that ſub-

ject,

ject, have made the greater encomiums on them, to criticiſe on their own countrymen; our notions with regard to them, are falſe in many reſpects.

We imagine their authors not ſo much addicted to flattery as ours; it would be tedious to examine by facts, whether this is not too favourable an opinion of them: we need only reflect on the party-ſpirit which reigns in England, to perceive that the ſame principle, which makes their authors ſo exceſſively ſatyrical, muſt alſo make them as extravagant in their panegyrics. Party-zeal exaggerates every thing, becauſe 'tis always either blind, or unjuſt; and being equally employ'd both in pulling down, and building up, takes all liberties to depreciate the one, and extol the other. An author who writes the moſt bitter ſatire, againſt very honeſt people, only becauſe they do not think as he does; laviſhes the groſſeſt flattery, on men without merit, when they embrace his ſentiments. According to mr. POPE, whoever oppoſes the preſent miniſtry, is a hero; and every partiſan of the court, a traytor to his country.

I do not know which of our authors it was, that has praiſed the Engliſh, for being leſs prodigal of *dedicatory epiſtles*, than we are; and more diſcreet in thoſe which they do write. He had probably read very few of their works. Almoſt all their theatrical pieces, as well as ours, are attended by this ſort of paſport. Every woman, to whom a comedy is dedicated,

is always, for ſprightlineſs of wit, the ſurprize; and fineneſs of taſte, the pattern of her age; when frequently her approbation of the performance, is the only proof the author can alledge, both of the one and the other: nay, they often dedicate plays to women, whoſe baſhfulneſs and modeſty they celebrate; the plots of which are ſo lewd, that they ought not to be permitted to be printed, in a well civiliz'd country. There is not one of DRYDEN's plays, at the head of which he does not laviſh his flattery, more meanly than any author I know of; as inſipid in his praiſe, as bitter in his ſatyre, he does not ſtick in both of them, to ſacrifice truth to his paſſions, or intereſt.

Were we to believe the authors of all theſe little panegyrics; England is peopled with Romans. If a baronet lives in the country, to improve his eſtate, or enjoy the ſweets of a country life; they make him an *Atticus*. A member of the houſe of commons, has no ſooner rail'd at the miniſter, in that houſe; than he becomes a *Cicero*: and if 'tis ſome factious ſpirit, who occaſions much talk of himſelf; he is a *Cato*, who leaves no ſtone unturn'd, to ſave the commonwealth.

Some pretend, they pay better for this flattery in England, than in France; but I will not enter into a diſcuſſion, which could only diſcover the mercenary diſpoſition of authors: nor will I even ſuſpect their praiſes proceed from a motive, which would make them ſo

con-

contemptible. This is certain, that the nobility here are very fond of dedications. The duke of SHREWSBURY, who had a great desire to have BAYLE's dictionary dedicated to him; made him an offer of two hundred guineas, to do it. The philosopher, who was perhaps more generous, than even the English peer, had the generosity and courage to refuse them. Such a disinteressedness, must do honour to the memory of BAYLE; and the offer, on the contrary, seems to shew the vanity, more than the generosity of the Englishman.

Don't let us take the English in all these respects for our masters. 'Tis very true that they are bolder, more severe, and perhaps more nervous in their satire, than we are; and I am undetermin'd whether we ought to envy them this advantage: but then they are not less extravagant in their penegyrics. These sorts of tribute, which we pay to friendship, esteem, or gratitude; if they are not weigh'd in the scales of truth, ought at least to be weigh'd in those of probability. Extravagant praise, only tends to make both the giver and receiver of it ridiculous.

I have the honour to be,

My lord duke,

Your most humble, &c.

LET-

LETTER XLI.

To Monſieur DE BUFFONS;

Of the Engliſh taſte for gardening and plantations; their many valuable authors on thoſe ſubjects; and the great improvements made in natural and experimental philoſophy, by the Royal Society at London.

STAMFORD, &c.

SIR,

I Shall have the pleaſure to ſatisfy you, and entertain you to day, with the taſte which the Engliſh have for gardening and plantations; and of the wonderful effects this taſte has produc'd in their country. I ſhall ſay nothing of their ability in this reſpect, you know it better than I do; and are yourſelf ſo well acquainted with every thing that regards gardening, and the culture of trees; that you are even able to give inſtructions to the Engliſh themſelves. Your penetrating genius has made you diſcover very early, what others learn only by experience; and you have had from your infancy a taſte for what is commonly the fruits of old age. For who beſides yourſelf, ever thought of planting trees at eighteen years of age? For even in England, where

where they have tried every thing, attempted every thing; has any one had the courage to ſet apart an hundred acres of his land, to make experiments on trees? They pretend that SOLOMON, who was acquainted with every plant and tree, from the *hyſſop* to the *cedar*; wrote a book on the manner of cultivating trees and plants, which we have loſt: tell the truth, ſir, did not you find it? If not, nobody ſince ſo many ages, has been more capable of repairing that loſs. You will do great ſervice, not only to our nation, but to mankind in general; when you ſhall pleaſe to impart to the public, the fruit of your obſervations. All ſtudies are commendable, all the ſciences are valuable; but men who are reaſonable enough to judge of things, by their utility; will not heſitate to place agriculture in the firſt rank. A man of learning, who employs his talents ſo uſefully for the commonwealth, participates of the dignity of a miniſter of ſtate.

You know, ſir, that this is the way of thinking in this country; which is inhabited by people of your taſte. The gardeners are not the only people who apply themſelves to gardening here; or rather, the Engliſh are all gardeners, more or leſs. The farmer in eaſy circumſtances, and the rich citizen, equally love planting; the nobility, and even many philoſophers, like you; make it their favourite occupation. Mr. PERAULT, in his *lives of the illuſtrious men of France*, remarks, that mr. ARNAULD D' ANDILLY, after ſeven or eight hours

hours ſtudy every day, diverted himſelf by taking the pleaſures of the country, and particularly with planting trees. And in this manner mr. Pope lives, in his pleaſant houſe at Twitenham. Such a life muſt have very powerful charms; Diocletian abdicated the empire to enjoy the ſweets of it; and when they came, in the preſſing neceſſities of the ſtate, to beg of him to take upon him again, the care of it; he anſwer'd thoſe who requeſted him to do it; *You would not give me this advice, if you had ſeen the fine row of trees, which I have myſelf planted, and the fine melons which I have ſown.*

As amongſt the Romans, a Cato did not diſdain to write upon Agriculture; ſo we muſt own to the honour of the Engliſh, that ſome of their moſt eminent authors, have publiſh'd very inſtructing works, on this ſubject. SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE, one of their beſt writers, has publiſh'd a very curious treatiſe on ancient and modern gardening; mr. EVELYN's treatiſe on foreſt trees is an excellent book. Mr. Mortimer has publiſh'd a treatiſe of huſbandry, equally agreable and uſeful. The celebrated mr. BRADLEY * has wrote very ſucceſsfully on the ſame ſubject. But who is better acquainted with all theſe works than you are?

To ſay this is one branch of knowledge, in which the Engliſh excell, is celebrating their praiſe; as 'tis the moſt important part of natural philoſophy. No other nation has

* The Author ſeems to confound Bradley the gardener with our learned aſtronomer royal of the ſame name.

has ſo many uſeful books on this ſubject; amongſt which I muſt not forget the dictionary of mr. Miller, who is the beſt gardener at this time in Europe. It were to be wiſhed that ſomebody took the pains, to tranſlate theſe works into our language; they would be of more ſervice to us, than the ſilly productions, which taſteleſs authors have preferr'd to them. You certainly ſet them an example worthy of imitation; when, purely out of love to natural philoſophy, and to facilitate the progreſs of thoſe who ſtudy it, you was pleaſed to interrupt your particular occupations, to tranſlate dr. Hales's *Vegetable Staticks*; * the beſt author the Engliſh have on this ſubject.

We ſee by all theſe Books on gardening, that it muſt be better underſtood here, than any where elſe; and indeed fruits and pulſe are no where cultivated with ſo much care and induſtry. Though the climate is not ſo favourable here, as in France, they have carryed the art much farther. You find in the markets at London, green peaſe more early than at Paris, and pine apples at all ſeaſons; and various ſorts of pulſe, which we have not, are very common. Brocoli, which is ſtill ſo rare with us, they eat here in the publick-houſes. In the gardens round about London, you find all ſorts of melons of every country; they have excellent peaches there; and I have myſelf

* This work was printed at Paris, in 1735, by James Vincent.

myſelf gather'd very good figs, in the north of England. What does not art and induſtry overcome? Nature herſelf ſubmits to the efforts of man, when he is reſolutely determin'd to conquer her. I have ſeen a fine example of this at a place near Kenſington; remarkable for an old houſe, whither, the famous CROMWELL, to whom it belong'd; uſed to go, to relieve himſelf from the fatigues of his uſurpation. The preſent owner of this houſe, has quite another ambition; he has undertaken to force nature there: and notwithſtanding the ungratefulneſs both of the ſituation and ſoil, he has turned a diſmal and barren moraſs into a pleaſant vineyard, which produces him a large quantity grapes; and made me taſte ſome wine of this growth, which is not diſagreeable. He ſent ſome of it laſt year, to the Engliſh ambaſſador in France; and this wine ſuch as it is, produces this induſtrious Engliſhman, more than any thing elſe he could have ſown, or planted in his incloſure.

You do not only find fruit-trees of all countries in England, but you alſo find a prodigious quantity of thoſe trees, which have no other worth, but their beauty, or the ſingularity of their form. The Engliſh import all ſorts of trees, at a great expence, from different parts of the world; and thoſe which thrive in the open air, they naturaliſe, and adorn their gardens with them. Thus we find here the cedar of Libanus, the Perſian plane-tree, the tulip-tree of the Iroquois, the *arbor Judæ*, &c.

&c. The ſame commerce, that aſſembles men of all nations upon the royal exchange in London, ſtocks the Engliſh gardens with trees of all climates. The Engliſh, in making this uſe of their riches, ſeem to me much wiſer than thoſe amongſt us, who ruin themſelves by changing their equipages every ſix months, and their ſnuff-boxes every week.

What makes the Engliſh love planting more than us, is, that thoſe who by their birth or riches, are of the greateſt diſtinction in the ſtate, live more in the country, than thoſe of the ſame rank do with us. Excluſive of the real uſefulneſs of plantations, they are one of the greateſt ſources of country amuſements. As the nobility ſet the faſhion to their inferiours, the farmer plants in imitation of his landlord. As he has groves of laurels, linden-trees, and phillyrea's, in his gardens; his farmer will at leaſt have a little model of it in his. In our villages, the farmers ſeldom plant any thing but apple-trees and cabbage; the Engliſh farmer has not only a kitchen-garden well furniſh'd and kept in good order, but if there are two fathoms of ground, before his houſe, which belongs to him; he makes a flower-garden of it, where he cultivates the roſe and lilly of the valley; a ſufficient proof of his eaſy circumſtances. They ſeldom employ themſelves in cultivating flowers, but when there ſeems to be a promiſing appearance of a good harveſt.

We muſt acknowledge to the honour of the Royal Society at London, that 'tis its continual attention to the public good, has procur'd England all theſe advantages; there are arts which it has carried to the higheſt perfection, as naval architecture, and every thing that concerns the eaſe and ſafety of navigation: and there are others it has rous'd from the fatal lethargy, they had ſo long been in. 'Tis this learned ſociety that has made agriculture honourable; 'tis their care, their labours, and their experiments have ſhewn the Engliſh, what a ſource of riches plantations may be. The Royal Society are the cauſe, that not only in England, but in Scotland and Ireland; in Virginia, Jamaica, Barbadoes, and all countries ſubject to the Engliſh, they plant woods, orchards, &c. and every body imbelliſhes his eſtate, by inriching it. They have lately planted the tea tree in Carolina, and pretend that it proſpers very well. Let us do juſtice to ſo many illuſtrious learned men, who have acquir'd this ſociety, ſo great a reputation over all Europe. 'Tis they have moſt enlighten'd the learned and civiliz'd world, with regard to all the benefits ſociety may reap, from the different branches of experimental philoſophy.

It will not be your fault, ſir, if we don't follow the wiſe example of our neighbours. You have not yet given in one memoire to the academy; you have not yet made one experiment, the immediate end of which, was

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not the public good. The perfection of arts, ought to be the ſole object of geometry. We have amus'd ourſelves too much hitherto with that which they call *tranſcendent*, but what would be more properly term'd, *uſeleſs*. All the diſcoveries we can make in it, are conqueſts that do not inrich us; the infinite ſpaces, we there run through, are only imaginary; geniuſes of a ſuperior claſs, are made to know them, but not to dwell there. We look upon hypotheſes, as the chimerical productions of diſorder'd heads; let us act accordingly, and not be afraid to rank amongſt uſeleſs employments, thoſe whoſe foundations are ſo imaginary. 'Tis abuſing geometry, to make uſe of it only in calculating riddles; for ſuch I term thoſe arbitrary queſtions, which they perplex, on purpoſe to have the pleaſure of explaining them by calculations: and when they have done it, reap no other benefit, than the merit of having overcome the difficulty. How many problems are nothing but riddles, more complicated than Mercury's ſymbols, and as uſeleſs for the advancement of our knowledge! Men of learning ought to ſet ſuch a value on themſelves, as to think they are accountable to the ſtate, for the fruit of their labours. The higheſt reputation, among a few particular perſons, who eſteem none but thoſe of their own taſte; is not worth that ſort of public regard, which they infallibly acquire, who are

ſolely employ'd in promoting the advantage of their fellow ſubjects.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XLII.

To the Marquis DU T***.

The manner how the Engliſh ſpend their time at table; the ceremony of toaſts, &c.

STAMFORD, &c.

MY LORD,

DON'T be ſurpriſed that I ſtay ſo long in the country; I am here, in one of the moſt agreeable parts of England, and with the moſt amiable people in the world; people, who have none of the prejudices of their nation, and againſt whom ours would have none; who join to the qualities, on which the ſafety of ſociety depends, thoſe which make it agreeable; ſuch as you yourſelf would be in love with, and who would know your value; ſuch as your converſation would make French, and by whoſe company, you would yourſelf imperceptibly become an Engliſhman. And though in this agreeable retirement, the ſeat of pleaſure and liberty, they don't think

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in all reſpects as we do; they live at leaſt exactly in the ſame manner. The way of living at London, has fallen heavy on me more than once, notwithſtanding the reſtraints I conſtantly laid myſelf under.

The pleaſures of the table, vary according to the different nations. Some make them conſiſt in the choice of the company, ſome nice diſhes, and the ſociableneſs and good humour of the gueſts; and others make more account of the plenty of liquors, than the choice of the diſhes; and ſtudy more to drown care with the fumes of wine, than diſſipate it by the charms of converſation. At London, they uſually meet, more to drink in a melancholly manner, to each others health; than converſe together with that freedom, which the table commonly gives.

When they drank harder in France, than they do at preſent; this cuſtom of drinking each others health, was alſo more frequent. It ſeems to derive its birth from intemperance. Men were ſo ſenſible of the unreaſonableneſs of drinking to exceſs, that they invented this ſort of politeneſs, to palliate the vice; by which means they have found a way to gratify their taſte, and force, as I may ſay, others to conform to it. In this ſenſe, the more intemperate people are, the more polite; and the Engliſh have carried this ſort of politeneſs very far. If there are any French, who can diſpute the prize with them; they are very rarely to be met with, except amongſt thoſe, who de-

derive both their original and name, from the the ancient inhabitants of this iſland. Drunkenneſs, ſince I muſt name it, is very common here, among people of all ranks; HOBBES conſiders it, as an infringement of the laws of nature; becauſe it hinders the uſe of reaſon: 'tis ſurpriſing therefore that a nation, which lays the greateſt pretenſions to good ſenſe; notwithſtanding bluſh the leaſt at a vice, that is the moſt contradictory to it.

Deſerts are very little uſed in England; a good butler is more eſteem'd here, than a confectioner would be, had he all the ability and fine taſte of Procopius. Even at tables where they ſerve deſerts, they do but juſt ſhew them, and preſently take away every thing, to the very table-cloth. By this the Engliſh, whom politeneſs does not permit to tell the ladies, their company is troubleſome to them; give them notice to retire, when they are weary of them; and ſchool-boys don't ſhow more joy, when their maſter goes out of ſchool; than the gueſts do, when they take leave of them. The ſatisfaction that appears in their looks, ſhews the pleaſure they feel; on finding themſelves freed from the reſtraint, the company of women laid them under: and notwithſtanding the little attention they pay them, the women always ſeem'd to me, to retire with as much regret; as the men ſhew'd ſatisfaction, at ſeeing them leave the room. The table is immediately cover'd with mugs, bottles and glaſſes; and often with pipes and tobacco: and

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all things thus diſpoſed, the ceremony of Toaſts begins. As I do not believe any body who has writ of the manners and ceremonies of nations, has treated of this cuſtom; 'tis proper I ſhould inform you of it.

The Engliſh call the healths of abſent perſons, Toaſts; which all the company reciprocally propoſe, and all are oblig'd to drink, on pain of the greateſt unpoliteneſs. I leave others to enquire into the etymology of this word, and the antiquity of the cuſtom. Perhaps the Engliſh derive it from the Goths, who are ſaid to have been hard-drinkers; and if ſo, they have the glory of having brought it to greater perfection. The young man toaſts his miſtreſs's health; the honeſt tradeſman, his correſpondent's; and the grave eccleſiatick, his Biſhop's. As to the Biſhop, he has that of his primate; and the primate may, if he pleaſes, drink to his gueſts *Proſperity to the proteſtant cauſe*, or any other Toaſt he thinks proper.

The maſter of the houſe, is the perſon who begins theſe rounds, and is oblig'd to take care of their order and exactneſs; both with regard to the manner of giving, and drinking the Toaſts, and to prevent any deviation from the rule, which obliges all the company to drink equally alike. This is an abridgement of the ceremony of Toaſts. The partiſans of the court, drink the health of the king, and all the royal family; thoſe who oppoſe the court,

my lord CARTERET's, mr. PULTNEY's, and of all thoſe who oppoſe the miniſter. The Jacobites drink the Pretender's health.

'Tis cuſtomary alſo, to toaſt the reigning beauties, even thoſe they know only by ſight; and by this means a coxcomb gives himſelf the air of a man of fortune. The ladies themſelves are pleaſed at this, when they come to hear of it, as this publick homage paid to their charms, is a proof of their fame. An Engliſhman who has ſpent three weeks at Paris, thinks it an honour to toaſt Mademoiſelle Gauſſin. Thus to make an encomium on a young beauty, they ſay, *ſhe is one of the firſt Toaſts in England.* She, on the contrary, whoſe lillies and roſes time has faded, is called a *caſt-off Toaſt*, A man would appear ridiculous to ſome ſort of people, who ſhould have the misfortune to give for his Toaſt, a beauty whoſe charms are faded. A man muſt be acquainted with the map of London, not to commit ſuch an abſurdity.

Thus the Romans at their entertainments, drank round in a cup made on purpoſe, which they called the *Magiſterial cup*, the healths of all their friends; and if it was their miſtreſs's, gallantry oblig'd them to drink as many cups, as there were letters in her name.

The men of learning in this country, tho' they ſubmit themſelves very little to the other cuſtoms of the nation; are very exact obſervers of this ceremony of Toaſts. They practice it the moſt frequently, and with the greateſt ſolemnity.

lemnity. Every one in his way, toaſts not only them of his own nation, but even the moſt eminent forreigners. I have had mr. BERNOULLI, mr. EULER, mr. MAUPERTUIS, mr. BUFFONS, &c. toaſted to me.

In the colleges, I have alſo heard, they ſometimes toaſt in Latin and Greek. For my part, I never aſſiſted at the noble ſacrifices, which the gentlemen of Oxford and Cambridge offer to Bacchus. I did not dare to puſh my inquiry, into the manners of the doctors of thoſe two famous univerſities, ſo far.

Theſe healths and theſe rounds very often continue, 'till they can continue them no longer. In the country as long as they laſt, they talk of nothing, but horſes and hunting; or elſe only drink and ſmoak: I know an Engliſhman, who every time you preſs him to ſpeak, ſays; *Talking ſpoils converſation.* In town, they entertain themſelves with the affairs of parliament, the ſtocks, and the Spaniſh galleons.

The ladies, who during this time are in another appartment, don't drink much leſs, but without running the ſame hazard; they drink tea; which they uſe morning and evening, 'till they can hardly breath: this contributes to augment their natural inclination to ſilence; which is however, perhaps more ſupportable, than the eternal clack of ſome of our Frenchwomen.

If they dine in taverns, which are very much frequented at London, by perſons of all ranks; the

the *Toaſts* vary ſtill more; very frequently after having drank to the health of their friends, they drink to the ruin, and damnation of their enemies. There is then no ſort of mad pranks they do not think of, to excite one another to drink.

Some years ſince, ſome young men of quality choſe to abandon themſelves to this ſort of debauchery, on the 30th of January; a day appointed by the church of England for a general faſt, to expiate the murther of king CHARLES I; whom they honour as a martyr. As ſoon as ever they were heated with wine, they began to ſing: this gave great offence to the people, who ſtopp'd before the tavern, and gave them abuſive language. One of theſe raſh young men, put his head out of the window, and drank to the memory of the army, which dethron'd this king, and of the rebels, who cut off his head upon a ſcaffold. The ſtones immediately flew from all parts; the furious populace broke the windows of the houſe, and would have ſet fire to it; and theſe ſilly young men had a great deal of difficulty to ſave themſelves.*

This is one of thoſe follies, which wine makes us capable of committing; and of which we

* An Engliſh clergyman, who could not bear the people ſhould drink to the memory of king WILLIAM, wrote a pamphlet againſt the cuſtom, of drinking to the memory of any perſon whatſoever; as being a profanation of the holy ſacrament. In ſeveral other works, the uſe of toaſts is condemn'd, as contrary to chriſtianity.

we every where find examples: and thus a man as unreaſonable, as intemperate, converts what kind nature has given us only for our pleaſure, into a ſource of troubles and diſorders.

I have the honour to be,
My lord,
Your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XLIII.

To Abbé L* C***.

Of the Engliſh ſermons, the want of action in Engliſh orators; and the decay of true eloquence in France.

GRANTHAM, &c.

SIR,

YOU inform me indeed of your imployment, but ſay not a word of your ſucceſs; however, don't imagine that our friends have not acquainted me, with what your modeſty conceals. I know with what applauſe you appear every day in the pulpit. Go on, ſir, you have taken the road that leads to the moſt ſolid glory, and even the moſt flattering; if a preacher were permitted to liſten to the voice of ſelf-love. What function is there more noble, both for a gentleman, and a chriſtian,

an, than to contribute to the benefit of religion and of ſociety; to wage war againſt vice, which diſhonours the one, and diſturbs the harmony of the other; to give virtue her juſt tribute of praiſe; to recall men to their duty, and conſequently to their true intereſt; and laſtly, to ſpeak the truth in the pulpit, the only place where her voice is heard by great men!

Methinks the Engliſh have not carried this ſort of eloquence, of which the Greek and Latin fathers have left us ſuch fine patterns, ſo far as we have done. FOSTER, WAKE, SHARPE, Dr. SHERLOCK and Dr. CLARKE, are not preachers comparable in my opinion to our BOSSUETS, FLECHIERS, CHEMINAIS and BOURDALOUES. The ſermons of Dr. SPRAT, biſhop of Rocheſter, are written in an affected ſtyle. Dr. TILLOTSON, archbiſhop of Canterbury in the reign of CHARLES II; is the moſt eminent of all the Engliſh preachers, and moſt worthy of eſteem. His ſermons, however, are more commendable for the purity and elegancy of his ſtyle, than for rhetoric. One finds in his works, more grace than energy; more argument than pathetic: you read them with pleaſure, but they do not move.

Action is one of the moſt eſſential qualifications of an orator; whether it be natural or acquir'd by art, if he has the happineſs to have it; the delivery of an ordinary diſcourſe will have a very great effect upon his auditors. This part of the orator the Engliſh want entirely.

tirely. *Our orators*, says mr. ADDISON, *both at the bar, and in the pulpit, are chargeable with a defect; and that is their want of action and gesture, which our modesty perhaps is the cause of: our preachers are like logs in the pulpit, and would not stir a finger, to set off the finest sermon in the world. At the bar, and in all public places of disputation, we find the same statues. We can talk of life and death in cold blood, and preserve our tranquility in discourses on which all that is dear to us depends.* How shall we reconcile what this sensible author says, with the manner in which affairs are debated in the house of commons; and the calmness which he speaks of, with the passion, and sometimes abusive language which one hears there? A member of that house at present, gives us a very different idea of it, and we cannot but commend his wise reflections. *When in the heat of a debate*, says he, *upon important points, the warmth of the disputants makes them exceed the bounds of decency and politeness, we must impute it to the frailty of our nature. Nobody ought to put a more severe construction upon an expression which may be dropp'd, than it necessarily implies.*

*'Tis neither commendable nor useful to have recourse to calumny and reproaches------- universal candour and mutual regard will tend more to secure our repose, and better support the dignity that is agreeable to this house; and which cannot be violated without dangerous consequences.**

ces. You ſee this diſcourſe intirely effaces the idea mr. Addiſon would give of the Engliſh; but the moſt reaſonable of them are not ſo always ſo, with regard to their own nation. What they may be juſtly charged with as defects, they have the art of converting to their praiſe; if they are not eloquent, 'tis becauſe they had rather be reaſonable; if they want gracefulneſs, 'tis becauſe their taſte for plainneſs makes them deſpiſe it.

The cuſtom of reading ſermons in England, is an obſtacle to all action; and conſequently makes the diſcourſe leſs pathetick. He who preaches without book, always moves more; becauſe he is more affected himſelf. Nevertheleſs an author, * who perhaps had not duly reflected on the advantages preaching may receive from oratory, propos'd to the Engliſh Biſhops, to collect a ſeries out of the printed ſermons, for the whole year; and to ſuffer none elſe to be read in the pulpit for the future. What would have been the conſequence, if they had followed the advice of his raſh zeal? That the readers of thoſe ſermons, being not animated with the heat of thoſe who compos'd them, would have been ſtill more lifeleſs; and that by ſuch a regulation, they would have put a total ſtop to the ſmall progreſs, the eloquence of the pulpit has made in England.

We

* Sir WILLIAM PETTY.

We have been happier than the Engliſh; perhaps at this time, we are not ſo wiſe. I ſay this to you, ſir, who are capable of knowing it, and whoſe ſound judgment muſt preſerve you from the contagion of example. We have deviated from our models, to adopt a taſte, abſolutely contrary to true eloquence; and what happen'd to the Romans, is happen'd to us. The natural no longer moves us; the fine ſimple and majeſtick are tireſome to us. Like people, whoſe vitiated palates can taſte nothing but ſtrong liquors; we muſt have flaſhes of wit and flights of imagination, witty portraits, ſtrings of antitheſes, and a ſtyle full of epigrams to move us: in ſhort, we give our whole attention to trifles, and neglect the main point. Our modern preachers and architects have much the ſame taſte. Our buildings are overcharg'd with ornaments, but the architecture is worth nothing; our ſermons are full of wit, but have not the leaſt eloquence in them. True orators, have always thought this ſearch after graces, an ornament unworthy of the majeſty of eloquence. That of our moderns, by glittering too much, only dazzles us; that of the CICEROS and BOSSUETS, lights us.

'Tis the ſame alſo in our poetry, they make good verſes, but they make no poems. In all ſorts of it, they will have nothing but wit; without perceiving, that when there is too much of it, 'tis folly. 'Tis the phrenſy of our age to imagine, that wit is more common

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in this, than 'twas in the laſt; and there is not a woman who does not give you as an inſtance of it, that they ſhew more of it, in works of all ſorts at this time, than you find in thoſe of the age of LEWIS XIV. I ſhall however venture to aſſert a paradox, which I make on purpoſe to ſurpriſe; this ſuperabundant wit, which our modern writings are full of, is perhaps the effect of our ſterility. We ſhew all we have, to impoſe on others; the authors of the laſt age, who were ſure to pleaſe, made uſe of none but what was neceſſary. They knew their riches, and how to make a proper uſe of them. Thoſe who affect to ſhew wit, in all parts of their writings, are with regard to thoſe wiſe authors; what pedlars are, who having but little, are oblig'd to ſhew all they have, to invite cuſtomers, compar'd to wholeſale-dealers; who being certain they have what will pleaſe all comers, expoſe no more to view, than juſt what is neceſſary to ſhew what they are. The diſcreet uſe RACINE and DESPREAUX have made of their wit, is an equal proof, both of their ſuperiority in that, and of their wiſdom. They wrote with a noble ſimplicity of ſtyle, in imitation of the good authors of the Auguſtan age; ſuch as VIRGIL, CICERO, LIVY, &c. However fine the genius of thoſe was, who came after them, their taſte was deprav'd. TACITUS only aims at expreſſing himſelf in an uncommon ſtyle; 'tis nothing but ornaments, that give SENECA an air

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of grandure; and his endeavours to affect it, convince us 'tis unnatural. Theſe are, unhappily, the authors our moderns ſeem to imitate. We run after wit, our eloquence is larded with it; and we loſe taſte, proportionably to our diſtance from thoſe happy times, in which almoſt all the arts were carried to their higheſt degree of perfection in France.

Acknowledge, ſir, we have already ſtrayed ſo far, that if we do not immediately return, we run the hazard of loſing ourſelves; and ſhall have great need of a Quintilian, to put us again into the right way.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XLIV.

To Monſieur DE LA CHAUSSEE;

Remarks on ſir RICHARD STEELE's Conſcious Lovers, *and mr. de la* CHAUSSEE's Ecole des amis.

GRANTHAM, &c.

SIR,

YOU might be very well aſſur'd, when you ſent me your * *Ecole des amis*, of the pleaſure I ſhould have in reading it. I had

* School of friendſhip.

had already heard of its ſucceſs, and was not ſurpris'd at it. The public take a pleaſure in doing you juſtice. A talent riſes in value by the uſe made of it. Your works tend equally to inſtruct and amuſe mankind: the fictions with which you imbelliſh morality, only make it more beneficial, by making it more agreeable. As in the performances of others, reaſon drolls, and becomes ſubſervient to our follies, to make us the more ſenſible of their ridiculouſneſs; in yours 'tis a friend who gains our confidence, and cures us of our failings, by ſhewing us the danger of them.

Continue, ſir, to labour, in a manner, that does equal honour both to our theatre and yourſelf; whatever tends to correct manners, falls under the cognizance of comedy: we are made as ſenſible of the folly of vice, by moving the heart, as by diverting the underſtanding. In the only comedy of CORNEILLE, which is played now a days; an old man's reproaching his ſon, with the ſhame which is inſeparable from lying, does not leſs expoſe the meanneſs of that vice, than the merrieſt paſſages in that play. Yours, ſir, are full of this ſort of beauties; and will reconcile to the theatre, thoſe which the licentiouſneſs of our old comedies had driven from it. Deſpiſe what thoſe worthleſs authors ſay, whoſe buſineſs it is, to criticiſe upon every thing, becauſe they live by it; and who have neither ſenſe, nor honour enough, to follow any other. Their cenſures, as ſevere as unjuſt, equally ex-

expoſe the vileneſs of their hearts and their want of judgment. Cenſure is a tribute, merit is oblig'd to pay to the ill nature of mankind. In the Roman triumphs, decreed to conquerors; it was permitted to exalt its voice, among the public acclamations of joy and thanks; however, none but the moſt worthleſs men made uſe of this privilege.

This ſort of comedy, in which you excell, is not ſo new, as thoſe ignorant, or lying critics pretend. TERENCE's Andria is a proof of it. Our neighbours have long ſince given us a pattern of this ſort; and in general, they ſucceed better in moving ſcenes, than merry ones. The comic in their theatrical pieces, is often over-ſtrain'd, but the paſſion is always true. He, who tranſlated the Andria into French, has not taken from it all that he might have done on the ſubject. Mr. STEELE, who has adapted it to the manners of his nation, has made it one of the beſt comedies on theEngliſh ſtage.*The ſcene in the fourth act, for which he wrote this play, as he ingenuouſly owns in his preface, is extremely fine, and entirely his own. 'Tis perfectly in your taſte; and ſince I can offer you nothing of my own, which can give you the pleaſure, your *Ecole des amis* has given me; I ſend you this ſcene, to convince you of my deſire to be out of your debt. 'Tis not neceſſary, for your underſtanding of it, to acquaint you with the characters; it will be ſufficient to tell you the

* The Conſcious Lovers.

different intereſts of the perſons, the author introduces into it. Mr. BEVIL and mr. MYRTLE are two friends. The firſt has the moſt tender paſſion for Indiana; ('tis Terence's Andria) but his father will have him marry Lucinda, whom mr. Myrtle is in love with.

ACT IV.

SCENE, Bevil, *jun. Lodgings.*

BEVIL, *jun. with a letter in his hand fol-*
[low'd by TOM.

TOM.

" Upon my life, ſir, I know nothing of the
" matter; I never open'd my lips to mr. Myr-
" tle, about any thing of your honour's letter
" to madam Lucinda.

BEVIL.

" What is the fool in ſuch a fright for? I
" don't ſuppoſe you did: what I would know
" is, whether mr. Myrtle ſhew'd any ſuſpici-
" on, or aſk'd you any queſtion, to lead you
" to ſay caſually, that you had carried any
" ſuch letter for me this morning.

TOM.

" Why, ſir, if he did aſk me any queſtions,
" how could I help it?

BEVIL.

" I don't ſay you could, oaf! I am not
" queſtioning you, but him: what did he ſay
" to you?

TOM.

TOM.

" Why, ſir, when I came to his chambers " to be dreſs'd for the lawyer's part, your " honour was pleas'd to put me upon, he " aſk'd me if I had been at mr. Sealand's this " morning?---So I told him, ſir, I often went " thither---becauſe, ſir, if I had not ſaid that, " he might have thought, there was ſome- " thing more, in my going now, than at ano- " ther time.

BEVIL.

" Very well! The fellow's caution, I find, " has given him this jealouſy, (*aſide*) did he " aſk you no other queſtions?

TOM.

" Yes, ſir,---now I remember, as we came " away in the hackney-coach, from mr. Sea- " land's, Tom, ſays he, as I came in to your " maſter this morning, he bade you go for an " anſwer to a letter he had ſent. Pray did you " bring him any? ſays he---Ah! ſays I, ſir, " your honour is pleas'd to joke with me, you " have a mind to know, whether I can keep " a ſecret or no?

BEVIL.

" And ſo, by ſhewing him you could, you " told him you had one?

TOM.

" Sir.

BEVIL. (*confus'd*)

" What mean actions does jealouſy make a " man ſtoop to? how poorly has he us'd art,

" with a ſervant, to make him betray his ma-
" ſter? well! and when did he give you this
" letter for me?

TOM.

" Sir, he writ it, before he pull'd off his
" lawyer's gown, at his own chambers.

BEVIL.

" Very well; and what did he ſay, when
" you brought him my anſwer to it.

TOM.

" He look'd a little out of humour, ſir,
" and ſaid, it was very well.

BEVIL.

" I knew he would look grave upon't,-----
" wait without.

TOM.

" Hum! 'gad, I don't like this; I am afraid
" we are all in the wrong box here-----

(*exit Tom*)

BEVIL.

" I put on a ſerenity, while my fellow was
" preſent; but I have never been more tho-
" roughly diſturb'd; this hot man! to write
" me a challenge, on ſuppoſed artificial dea-
" ling, when I profeſs'd myſelf his friend! I
" can live contented without glory; but I can-
" not ſuffer ſhame. What's to be done? But
" firſt, let me conſider LUCINDA's letter again,

(*reads*)

SIR,

I hope it is conſiſtent with the laws a woman ought to impoſe upon herſelf, to acknowledge, that your manner of declining a treaty of marri-

age,

ege, in our family, and deſiring the refuſal may come from me, has ſomething more engaging in it, than the courtſhip of him, who, I fear, will fall to my lot; except your freind exerts himſelf, for our common ſafety and happeneſs: I have reaſons for deſiring mr. Myrtle *may not know of this letter, 'till hereafter, and am your moſt obliged humble ſervant,*

LUCINDA SEALAND.

Well, but the poſtſcript.

(*reads*)

I won't upon ſecond thought, hide any thing from you. But, my reaſon for concealing this is, that mr. Myrtle *has a jealouſy in his temper, which gives me ſome terrors; but my eſteem for him inclines me to hope that only an ill effect, which ſometimes accompanies a tender love; and what may be cured, by a careful and unblameable conduct.*

" Thus has this lady made me her friend " and confident, and put herſelf, in a kind, " under my protection: I cannot tell him im- " mediately the purport of her letter, except " I could cure him of the violent and untrac- " table paſſion of jealouſy, and ſo ſerve him, " and her, by diſobeying her, in the article " of ſecrecy, more than I ſhould by comply- " ing with her directions---but then this du- " elling, which cuſtom has impoſed upon e- " very man, who would live with reputation " and honour in the world :--How muſt I " preſerve myſelf from imputations there? " He'll, forſooth, call it, or think it fear, if

" I explain without fighting---But his letter---
" I'll read it again------

Sir,

You have uſed me baſely, in correſponding, and carrying on a treaty, where you told me you were indifferent. I have changed my ſword ſince I ſaw you; which advertiſement I thought proper to ſend you againſt the next meeting, between you and the injur'd

CHARLES MYRTLE.

Enter Tom.

Tom.

" Mr. Myrtle, ſir, would your honour pleaſe
" to ſee him?

Bevil.

" Why you ſtupid creature! let mr. Myr-
" tle wait at my lodgings!--- ſhew him up.
" (*exit Tom*) well! I am reſolved upon my
" carriage to him--he is in love, and in every
" circumſtance of life a little diſtruſtful,
" which I muſt allow for-----but here he is.

Enter Tom *introducing* Myrtle.

" Sir, I am extremely oblig'd to you for
" this honour; --- but, ſir, you with your
" very diſcerning face, leave the room. (*Exit
" Tom.*) Well! mr. Myrtle, your commands
" with me?

Myrtle.

" The time, the place, our long acquain-
" tance, and many other circumſtances,
" which affect me on this occaſion, oblige
" me

" me, without farther ceremony, or confe-
" rence, to desire you would not only, as
" you already have, acknowledge the receit
" of my letter, but also comply with the re-
" quest of it. I must have farther notice ta-
" ken of my message, than these half-lines,--
" I have your's,---I shall be at home.---

Bevil.

" Sir, I own, I have receiv'd a letter from
" you, in a very unusual style; but as I de-
" sign every thing, in this matter, shall be
" your own action, your own seeking, I
" shall understand nothing, but what you
" are pleased to confirm, face to face, and I
" have already forgot the contents of your
" epistle.

Myrtle.

" This cool manner is very agreeable to
" the abuse you have already made of my
" simplicity and frankness; and I see your
" moderation tends to your own advantage,
" not mine; to your own safety, not consi-
" deration of your friend.

Bevil.

" My own safety, mr. Myrtle?

Myrtle.

" Your own safety, mr. Bevil.

Bevil.

" Look you, mr. Myrtle, there's no dis-
" guising that I understand what you would
" be at.--- But, sir, you know, I have often
" dar'd to disapprove of the decisions a ty-

" rant

" rant cuſtom has introduc'd, to the breach
" of all laws, divine and human.

Myrtle.

" Mr. Bevil, mr. Bevil, it would be a
" good firſt principle, in thoſe who have ſo
" tender a conſcience that way, to have as
" much abhorrence of doing injuries, as---

Bevil.

" As what?

Myrtle.

" As fear of anſwering for them!

Bevil.

" As fear of anſwering for them! But that
" apprehenſion is juſt or blameable, accord-
" ing to the object of that fear.---I have of-
" ten told you in confidence of heart, I ab-
" horred the daring to offend the Author of
" life, and ruſhing into his preſence.--- I ſay,
" by the ſame act, to commit the crime a-
" gainſt him, and immediately to urge on to
" his tribunal.

Myrtle.

" Mr. Bevil, I muſt tell you, this cool-
" neſs, this gravity, this ſhew of conſcience,
" ſhall never cheat me of my miſtreſs. You
" have, indeed, the beſt excuſe for life, the
" hopes of poſſeſſing Lucinda; but conſider,
" ſir, I have as much reaſon to be weary of
" it, if I am to loſe her; and my firſt at-
" tempt to recover her, ſhall be to let her
" ſee the dauntleſs man, who is to be her
" guardian and protector.

Bevil.

" Sir, ſhew me but the leaſt glimpſe of
" argument, that I am authoriſed, by my
" own hand, to vindicate any lawleſs inſult
" of this nature, and I will ſhew thee --- to
" chaſtiſe thee, hardly deſerves the name of
" courage --- ſlight, inconſiderate man! ----
" There is, mr. Myrtle, no ſuch terror in
" quick anger; and you ſhall, you know
" not why, be cool, as you have, you know
" not why been warm.

Myrtle.

" Is the woman one loves, ſo little an oc-
" caſion of anger? You perhaps, who know
" not what it is to love, who have your rea-
" dy, your commodious, your foreign trin-
" ket, for your looſe hours, and from your
" fortune, your ſpecious outward carriage,
" and other lucky circumſtances, as eaſy a
" way to the poſſeſſion of a woman of ho-
" nour; you know nothing of what it is to
" be allarmed, to be diſtracted, with anxie-
" ty, and terror of loſing more than life:
" your marriage, happy man! goes on like
" common buſineſs; and in the interim, you
" have your rambling captive, your Indian
" princeſs, for your ſoft moments of dalli-
" ance, your convenient, your ready In-
" diana.

Bevil.

" You have touch'd me beyond the pa-
" tience of a man; and I am excuſable in
" the guard of innocence (or from the in-

" firmity

" firmity of human nature, which can bear
" no more) to accept your invitation, and
" obſerve your letter--- Sir, I'll attend you.

Enter Tom.

Tom.

" Did you call, ſir, I thought you did:
" I heard you ſpeak aloud?

Bevil.

" Yes, go call a Coach.

Tom.

" Sir,---maſter,---mr. Myrtle,---friends,---
" gentlemen, what do you mean? I am but
" a ſervant, or---

Bevil.

" Call a Coach.

(A long pauſe, walking ſuddenly by each other, Exit Tom.*)* *(Aſide.)* " Shall I (though
" provoked to the uttermoſt) recover myſelf
" at the entrance of a third perſon, and that
" my ſervant too, and not have reſpect e-
" nough to all I have ever been receiving
" from my infancy, the obligation to the beſt
" of fathers, an unhappy virgin too, whoſe
" life depends on mine.

(ſhutting the door.

" *(To* Myrtle.) I have, thank heaven, had
" time to recollect myſelf, and ſhall not for
" fear, of what ſuch a raſh man as you think
" of me, keep longer unexplain'd the falſe
" appearances, under which your infirmity
" of temper makes you ſuffer; when, per-
" haps, too much regard to a falſe point of
" honour, makes me prolong that ſuffering.

Myrtle.

Myrtle.

" I am ſure, mr. Bevil cannot doubt, but " I had rather have ſatiſfaction from his inno- " cence, than from his ſword.

Bevil.

" Why then would you aſk it firſt that way?

Myrtle.

" Conſider, you kept your temper, your- " ſelf no longer, than 'till I ſpoke to the diſ- " advantage of her you lov'd.

Bevil.

" True. But let me tell you, I have ſaved " you from the moſt exquiſite diſtreſs, even " though you had ſucceeded in the diſpute: " I know you ſo well, that I am ſure, to have "found this letter about a man you had killed, " would have been worſe than death to your- " ſelf----read it (*aſide*) when he is thoroughly " mortified, and ſhame has got the better of " jealouſy, when he has ſeen himſelf tho- " roughly, he will deſerve to be aſſiſted to- " wards obtaining Lucinda.

Myrtle.

" With what a ſuperiority has he turn'd " that injury on me, as the aggreſſor? I begin " to fear I have been too far tranſported---*A* " *treaty in our family*! is not that too much?-- " I ſhall relapſe--but I find (in the poſtſcript, " *ſomething like jealouſy*----with what face can " I ſee my benefactor? My advocate? whom " I have treated like a betrayer.---O! Bevil, " with what words ſhall I----

Bevil.

Bevil.

" There needs none; to convince, is much
" more than to conquer.

Myrtle.

" But can you----

Bevil.

" You have overpaid the inquietude you
" gave me, in the change I see in you to-
" wards me. Alas! what machines are we!
" Thy face is altered to that of another man;
" to that of my companion, my friend.

Myrtle.

" That I could be such a precipitant wretch!

Bevil.

" Pray no more.

Myrtle.

" Let me reflect how many friends have
" died, by the hands of friends, for want of
" temper; and you must give me leave to say
" again, and again, how much I am beholden
" to that superior spirit you have subdu'd me
" with----what had become of one of us, or
" perhaps both, had you been as weak as I
" was, and as incapable of reason?

Bevil.

" I congratulate to us both the escape from
" ourselves, and hope the memory of it will
" make us dearer friends than ever.

Myrtle.

" Dear Bevil, your friendly conduct has
" convinc'd me that there is nothing manly,
" but what is conducted by reason, and agrea-
" ble to the practice of virtue and justice.

" And

" And yet, how many have been ſacrific'd
" to that idol, the unreaſonable opinion of
" men! nay, they are ſo ridiculous in it, that
" they often uſe their ſwords againſt each o-
" ther, with diſſembled anger, and real fear.
" Betray'd by honour, and compell'd by
" ſhame,
" They hazard being, to preſerve a name;
" Nor dare inquire into the dread miſtake,
" 'Till plung'd in ſad eternity they wake.

This ſcene is, if I miſtake not, an excellent leſſon not only for friends, but for all mankind in general; as the ſtrongeſt and moſt unreaſonable of all prejudices is attack'd by it.

I have the honour to be,
Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XLV.

To the Duke of NIVERNOIS;

Of the diverſity of opinions in England concerning publick affairs; and the ſum of the debates in the houſe of commons on the army.

STAMFORD, &c.

MY LORD DUKE,

I Find by the honour of your letter, that you are as well acquainted with Tacitus, as with Horace; and that though mr. ADDISON

and

and mr. POPE divert you, you had rather converſe with my lord chancellor CLARENDON and biſhop BURNET. You know the Engliſh almoſt as well as if you had liv'd among them.

Since you have mentioned politicks to me, I'll go into your ſtrain, for fear of drawing ſome reproaches on me, if I don't; becauſe I plainly perceive 'tis the leſſon you have ſet me. The odious names of Whig and Tory, which you mention in your letter, and which made ſo much noiſe in the reign of queen ANN, are now almoſt intirely forgot in England; but the ſame parties ſtill ſubſiſt, under different denominations. *Corruption* and *oppoſition*, are the two terms at preſent made uſe of, to diſtinguiſh thoſe who are for or againſt the miniſtry.

The great conflagration kindled in England by the love of liberty, or perhaps, the independent ſpirit; is not yet quite extinguiſh'd: there ſtill remains a fire conceal'd under the aſhes, and the ſparks which fly from it, from time to time, are ſufficient to kindle ſuch like conflagrations.

Party ſpirit is ſo common in England, that you can hardly diſcover what is the real one of the nation. Who would not think that the acts of the parliament which repreſents it, were by the conſent of the whole; and yet, if you'll believe the publick clamour; they are only the work of a corrupt majority, who ſacrifice their country to the ſelfiſh views of the miniſter.

'Tis

'Tis ſurpriſing to find here, ſuch a contrariety of opinions, in the moſt eſſential things; and which moſt nearly concern the intereſts of the people. Some look on thoſe meaſures, as incompatible with liberty, which others maintain are neceſſary for the preſervation of the laws, and government. And thus I ſaw the nation, laſt winter, divided in their ſentiments concerning the act of Parliament, which grants the king the continuance of the *ſixteen Thouſand* land forces, which he has actually on foot.

I was in the houſe of commons, on the day appointed to debate this great queſtion, which has been already ſo often debated there. Every body at London, knew how it would be carried; and whatever the power and liberty of this venerable aſſembly may be, 'tis almoſt always the ſame with regard to the moſt important points; they are determin'd in private, before ever they come to be publickly debated. Thoſe who ſpeak with the greateſt warmth againſt an act, know very well, they ſhall not be able to prevent its paſſing: yet nevertheleſs, they either do their duty, or gratify their paſſions; and comfort themſelves, for the uſeleſneſs of their endeavours, with the honour they gain by oppoſing; or the pleaſure they feel, in making uſe of the liberty they have, to ſay what they pleaſe.

The member, who firſt declared his opinion, for continuing the troops on foot; ſeem'd to me, to ſupport his advice with very good reaſons. " He maintain'd that,

" the ſpirit of diſcontent and ſedition was ne-
" ver more common in England, than at pre-
" ſent; and would certainly raiſe a rebellion,
" if it was not kept under, by an army always
" ready, either to prevent the malady, or ſti-
" fle it in its birth. He added; that conſidering
" the continual endeavours of different parties
" to alienate the affections of the ſubjects from
" their ſovereign, and inſpire the nation with
" a hatred for the preſent government, and
" contempt for the parliament itſelf, it
" was impoſſible, without the aſſiſtance of
" an army, to make the laws reſpected, and
" thoſe who were the ſupport of them: that
" of late years, acts of parliament, whoſe ſole
" aim, was the general good of the nation,
" had met with the ſtrongeſt oppoſition from
" the people; and that had it not been for the
" troops, turbulent and factious ſpirits would
" have taken advantage of theſe troubles, to
" plunge the nation into greater diſorders;
" from whence it is eaſy to conclude, that
" the diſbanding, or what was pretty near the
" ſame thing, the weakening of the army, was
" the ſure way to abandon England to the fu-
" ry of civil wars.

" They uſe their utmoſt endeavours, conti-
" nued he, to render the deſigns of the govern-
" ment ſuſpected; they pretend that an army
" in time of peace, threatens our liberty: but
" inſtead of ſuffering ourſelves to be frighted
" with imaginary fears, let us examine, ſaid
" he; whether it has really done it the leaſt

prejudice.

" prejudice. So long as the laws are religiouſ-
" ly obſerv'd, the clergy enjoy their rights,
" the diſſenters are protected, and every pri-
" vate man's property is ſecure; an Engliſh-
" man who has both his fortune and conſci-
" ence at his own command, has nothing to
" apprehend from an army, whoſe ſole view
" is to make the laws reſpected, and preſerve
" the tranquility of the government.

He had hardly finiſhed his diſcourſe, when a man, who was cloſe by me, and ſeem'd to have liſtened with impatience, ſaid loud enough for me to hear him, and in a blunt and angry tone; 'Tis not three years, ſince this ſame member thought and ſpoke very differently. He was not ſo eaſy with regard to liberty, and did not look on the army with ſo favourable an eye, before the court had blinded him with a penſion. And all thoſe, added this angry Engliſhman, who ſpeak in the ſame language, are determined by the ſame motives. Some are paid for ſpeaking, and others for being ſilent. He had carried his ſatire farther, had not one of the oppoſite party, roſe up to anſwer the firſt. He is reputed a truly eloquent man, and I am ſorry I am not able to give you his diſcourſe, with all the energy it ſeem'd to flow from him. This is, however, the ſummary of his reaſons.

" I can't, ſaid he, think a people free, who
" concur in maintaining an army, without the
" leaſt neceſſity. Were we not totally dege-
" nerated from the virtue of our anceſtors, in-

" ſtead of examining whether we ſhould di-
" miniſh the army, or keep it on the ſame
" footing; it would be unanimouſly diſbanded.
" What need have we of it? We are in peace
" with all Europe. * An army in time of
" peace, is contrary to the conſtitution of this
" country; liberty and an arm'd force, are
" things incompatible in their natures. The
" Athenians, a wiſe people, and jealous of
" their liberty; loſt it, by granting Piſiſtratus
" only forty guards, for the ſecurity of his
" perſon. The continuance of CÆSAR's com-
" miſſion in the Gauls, inabl'd him to deſtroy
" the moſt powerful, and beſt eſtabliſh'd re-
" publick in the world. Without having re-
" courſe to foreign examples, 'tis not a cen-
" tury ſince in London itſelf, an army rais'd
" by the parliament, enſlav'd it. In the courſe
" of a few years, that formidable body intro-
" duc'd ten different forms of government, all
" equally contrary to the genius of the nation,
" and even to the opinion of the greateſt part
" of CROMWELL's followers. A general has
" ſuch power over an army; that although the
" ſentiments of thoſe 'tis compos'd of, differ
" from his, he can oblige them to act me-
" chanically, according to his own views.
" Thus the Greeks themſelves, contrary to
" their wills, ſubverted the liberty of Greece.
" And thus the Romans, contrary to their
" intention, ſubverted the Roman republick,
" and made themſelves ſlaves to one man. In
" fine, thusEngliſhmen armed for the defence
of

* In 1737.

" of the laws and liberty, tyraniz'd in the
" moſt odious manner, over their country-
" men. If Great Britain is ever to bear a fo-
" reign you; her own inhabitants, like thoſe
" of Rome, muſt pave the way by bind-
" ing her in chains of iron. Thus every
" zealous Engliſhman has reaſon to be al-
" larm'd at the numerous troops we keep on
" foot, without the leaſt neceſſity. 'Tis in
" vain to ſay, that as the army are paid by the
" publick, they properly ſpeaking, depend on
" the people; was not the army in 1641,
" which inſlav'd the nation, paid by the ſame?
" Were not all the armies, in every country
" whatever, that have enſlav'd their country-
" men, paid by the publick? The Romans
" payed the very army, that aſſiſted CÆSAR
" to inſlave them: an army, commonly de-
" pends leſs on thoſe that pay them, than on
" him who names their generals; they know
" nobody but their commander; and at his
" command, will ſpread fire and deſolation
" through their country, and point their dag-
" gers at the breaſts of their own parents.

" Beſides, is it reaſonable to expect ſoldiers
" will be more virtuous now, than the Ro-
" mans, or our own anceſtors were? We
" don't pretend, I think, that the preſent ge-
" neration are animated with a greater zeal
" for the public welfare, than the Romans
" were in CÆSAR's time, or our own coun-
" trymen, in the middle of the laſt century.
" Let us run over our annals; ſhall we find an

" age when corruption was more general the " great ſo ſway'd by private intereſt, and " the common people ſo much addicted to " all ſorts of vice? Not to fear an army in " theſe critical times, is the ſtrongeſt proof of " our inſenſibility of every thing, that threatens " our liberty. To maintain an army, in the " preſent circumſtances of affairs, is forging " chains for ourſelves."

During this harangue, I looked every now and then at the honeſt Engliſhman, who had been ſo much offended at the former ſpeech; and imagined this would pleaſe him. So, as ſoon as it was finiſh'd, I complimented him on the ſatisfaction, ſo ſtrenuous a champion for his country, muſt give him. 'Tis very true, ſaid he, we have heard a man, who ſpeaks well; but what a misfortune is it, that we can ſay nothing more in his praiſe, and can't rely on his manner of thinking! And immediately reſuming his angry air and blunt tone; yes, ſir, continued he, if this ſame orator, that we now admire; were admitted to morrow into the miniſtry, he would do juſt like thoſe, againſt whom he has ſpoke with ſo much vehemence.* And unfortunately, almoſt all thoſe who ſeem moſt intent on the public welfare, in reality, regard nothing but their private intereſt; thus while ſome ſupport all the meaſures of the government, becauſe they are bought by places, imployments, or pen-

* *At odit eos qui ſubitâ & magnâ potentiâ inſolenter utuntur, idem faciet, cum idem poterit.* SENECA, Lib. 6. of his epiſtles.

penſions; others only oppoſe the court, becauſe they have not yet been offered any thing, capable of ſatisfying their avarice or ambition. One is only ſo zealous for the public good, becauſe they would not make him a peer; another only rails ſo violently againſt the king's privy-council, becauſe they would not make him ſecretary of ſtate. *O venal city*, cry'd JUGURTHA, when he left Rome, *that would ſoon be ſold, if there were but a purchaſer*. We but too much deſerve this reproach; and indeed we have already had it, when a miniſter ſpeaking of this very houſe of commons, ſaid; *that he could have all the votes, if he would; but that he contented himſelf with buying only as many as were neceſſary, to make him maſter of it*. The venality of votes caus'd the ruin of the Roman republic; the ſenſleſs people, ſold ambitious citizens a power to oppreſs them: I don't know what we ſhall be hereafter, but 'tis certain, we are not what we have been. We have none of that ancient ſpirit left, which was ſo many years the *palladium* of our liberty. If this zealous man had been impower'd to harangue the aſſembly, we ſhould have had a *philippick* immediately.

As to myſelf, I can't think that things are quite ſo bad, as the diſcontented are pleas'd to repreſent them; but then I am certain, that they are very different from what moſt of the Engliſh would perſwade us. As the one exaggerate too much, the dangers that menace their liberty; the others are not careful

enough, to preſerve the pretious depoſitum in all it's purity.

I have the honour to be,
My lord duke,
Your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XLVI.

To the Chevalier DE B**.

Of the violent paſſion the Engliſh of both ſexes have for hunting.

STAMFORD, &c.

SIR,

'TIS not uneaſineſs that makes me go a hunting; that often goes along with thoſe, who have no other means of avoiding it. I love the exerciſe of riding; and find that Plato and Pliny were much in the right, to recommend it as ſalutary. Moſt of our inclinations ſpring from our exigences I own, that without having a paſſion for hunting, the ſound of the horn, makes me willingly renounce the ſilence of my cloſet. Beſides, thoſe who have ſo well acquainted you with my way of life; make no doubt, but that during the chaſe, I am as much taken up with the hunters, as with the ſtag they purſue. If, as you ſay, I play the fool, with fools; 'tis becauſe I can't be admitted amongſt them, on other terms; and

and nothing, I think, makes us know the value of wiſdom better, than ſeeing the folly of others.

I live here, with people, whoſe chief pleaſure is hunting; and in a nation, where every body loves it. The clergyman, the lawyer, the perſon they call here, *juſtice of the peace*, the common farmer, rich or poor; in a word, all the Engliſh, of what rank ſoever, leave every thing for hunting. I have ſeen more than once, grey-headed clergymen ride with as much eagerneſs, as young people of twenty. Love is the paſſion of youth; avarice of old age; but here, hunting ſeems to be the paſſion of all ages. I frequently ſee a certain baronet, whoſe favourite pleaſure it has always been, and is ſtill; he is a hero of his kind; and who, though cover'd with glory, daily braves the danger. He relates the hurts he has receiv'd, by ſeveral unhappy falls; ſhews every moment his noble ſcars, and is as vain of the conſequences of his folly; as if thoſe wounds were proofs of his courage, and he had receiv'd them in the ſervice of his country. How many men, in truth, owe all their happineſs and merit to nothing but their folly! But who would imagine, that hunting, could be the greateſt pleaſure of a philoſopher; and he a blind one? Yet, ſo it is of the famous SANDERSON, profeſſor of the mathematics at Cambridge; whoſe misfortune to have loſt his ſight, neither hinders his giving leſſons on optics, nor hunting the fox. His horſe is uſed

to

to follow his ſervants; and 'tis not the exerciſe only that he loves: the noiſe of the dogs and huntſmen tranſports him; and he makes as much himſelf, as all the reſt of the company. MONTAGNE ſpeaks of a man born blind, who had the ſame paſſion for hunting; *there*, ſays he, *is a hare catch'd; and he is as proud of the taking her, as he hears others ſay, they are.* We owe all our happineſs to our fancy; and how happy is the man, who has one, ſo cheaply gratify'd!

I call to mind a joke that I have read ſomewhere in mr. ADDISON. To ridicule the Scots, who arm'd, in the late king's reign, in favour of the pretender, he ſays, that a fox happen'd one day to croſs their camp; and immediately the whole army, officers and ſoldiers, purſued it, and 'twas not in the power of their chiefs to ſtop them.

Though all the terms of hunting in the Engliſh language, are borrow'd from the French; yet it cannot be ſaid, the Normans inſpir'd them with this taſte: 'tis innate, as the ſevere laws, with regard to hunting, made immediately after the conqueſt, ſufficiently prove. The penalty of them, is not ſo much proportioned, to the heinouſneſs of the offence; as to the ſtrong deſire, particular perſons had to break them. However, I think the ſentence of one of their authors, who pretends this paſſion in his countrymen, *proves their affinity with the ſavages of America*, is too ſevere. As violent as the exerciſe of hunting is, the

the women in England, ſeem to like it as well as the men. Every nation has its particular cuſtoms and defects. They blame us, and not without reaſon, for having carried luxury to exceſs, in France. With us, even in the country, a woman of quality paſſes the morning in bed, and the afternoon upon a ſopha, or at a card table. Women of quality here, lead quite a different life; thoſe who are reaſonable, employ themſelves in enquiring into their houſhold-affairs; and others give themſelves, perhaps too much, to hunting. Many Engliſh women pique themſelves on riding, as well as men; and leaping a ditch, as boldly as a huntſman.

A woman, one day, being deſirous to make a conqueſt of a courtier, who was extremely fond of hunting; riſqu'd the breaking of her neck, to have the happineſs to pleaſe him. She leap'd a gate, that ſtop'd the boldeſt hunters; her courage was admir'd, and produc'd an effect, on the heart of the man ſhe deſired to gain; which, perhaps, all her charms could not have done. HERCULES was obliged to ſpin, to pleaſe OMPHALE; and women muſt hunt, to gain the hearts of ſome Engliſhmen. JUVENAL tells us, that the Romans, in his time, were ſo paſſionately fond of prize-fighting; that the ladies themſelves made it a point of honour, to be excellent at it; and exerciſed themſelves in the amphitheatre, by fighting one againſt another, or againſt wild beaſts. In all probability, they ſhew'd their addreſs and intrepidity

intrepidity, from the ſame motive. A deſire to pleaſe, is the firſt mover, of almoſt all the actions of the female ſex.

We have ſeen one of the greateſt beauties in England, the dutcheſs of Q***, go to the academy, like a young page, to learn to ride. We have in our neighbourhood a lady, who is one of the greateſt fox-hunters in England; ſhe hunts the hounds herſelf, and he muſt be a bold ſportſman that follows her.

Our women, who are ſo fond of perfumes, don't much reſemble thoſe of this country, who love to breath the air of a ſtable. Many here, go and feed their horſes themſelves, and, if I may ſay ſo, drink their tea with them. They pretend that ſome of them, even finiſh their dreſſing in the ſtable; but in this, I believe they are falſely accuſed, for a keen huntreſs is very ſoon dreſs'd.

HOMER tells us, ANDROMACHE took ſuch care of HECTOR's horſes; that ſhe gave them meat and drink, oft'ner than ſhe did him. Many Engliſh, without giving theſe domeſtick animals that preference, glory in loving them. One frequently finds in the country, women who talk of nothing but horſes and hunting, and who underſtand a good hunter, as well as the beſt jockey.

Without prejudice; will you not grant, that women talk with a better grace, of caps and ribbons, the play and opera; than of ſaddles and horſes, of buck and fox-hunting? Whether a man be Engliſh or French, if he is rational,

tional, he will not like to ſee, either an effeminate man, or a maſculine woman. A woman at the head of a pack of hounds, is as ridiculous as a man at his toillet. She who has not the timidity of her ſex, more frequently exchanges it for a vice, than a virtue. A French fop, who gives a learned diſſertation, upon adjuſting a ribbon on a cap; is very contemptible: an Engliſh woman, who deſcants on the manner of forcing a fox, is a woman fit only for hunters. Both ſexes are equally concern'd to diſclaim, both men that are women, and women that are men; they are both unnatural: and indeed, nothing but unform'd beings, who have ſuch a mixture of contrary qualities, as makes their natures undiſtinguiſhable.

It is not ſurpriſing that people of fortune in England, ſhould be ſo much addicted to an exerciſe, that is one of the greateſt amuſements in the country; they ſpend half their lives there. London is the rendevous of all the nobility of the kingdom; there are great riches and plenty there, but very little pleaſure; whether it be, that the political affairs they are employ'd in, are contrary to it, or that the ſea-coal ſmoak and fogs of the Thames, diſpoſe their minds otherwiſe. Moſt of the nobility only come to town to ſit in parliament, and leave it as ſoon as the ſeſſion is finiſhed, which always laſts longer than they deſire. What could they do in the country if they did not hunt? The company of thoſe who come to viſit them, is not very

very entertaining. The country people in England, to ſay nothing more, are very clowniſh and unpoliſhed; and the clergy in the country, are not much more agreable company. Theſe honeſt gentlemen are never eaſy but in each others company, and commonly, had rather ſmoak at the ſteward's table, than dine at the maſter's. What can they do better with people, whoſe company is troubleſome to them, than take them a hunting?

Thoſe who are not hunters, are ſurpris'd at the violent paſſion, ſo many people have for this exerciſe; becauſe they don't know the principle, from whence it ariſes. We muſt not reflect too much on the nature of our pleaſures; there are but too many of them, that give us cauſe to be aſhamed of ourſelves. And why do we find ſo much, in running after a miſerable animal, if it was not from the neceſſity of flying from ourſelves? We don't ſeek for the animal, we fly from ourſelves. Our faculties both of body and mind, become our enemies, if we leave them inactive; the one fall into a lethargy, for want of exerciſe; the other languiſhes for want of motion. Gaming, in which ſo many people ſpend their time, is a proof, that men cannot live perfectly idle. 'Tis the diverſion of thoſe, who know how to employ themſelves; the buſineſs of thoſe, who have nothing to do: generally ſpeaking, it gives more pain than pleaſure, and leaves no ſatisfaction after it; yet, with what eagerneſs do both ſexes give themſelves up to it, particularly

ly amongſt the quality? We are all of ſuch a nature, that we are not ſenſible of our exiſtence but by the ſhocks of pleaſure and pain; we languiſh in tranquility. Man is like a ſhip at ſea, which has as much to fear, from the total inaction of a calm, as from the moſt violent agitation of the waves.

I cannot better conclude a letter, in which I have made ſo much mention of hunting, than with an adventure, which I was lately witneſs to. We were hunting a ſtag, and fifty farmers follow'd the chaſe. I perceiv'd at the head of them, a man, whoſe odd dreſs ſtruck me; he was cloath'd in leather, and had a bag hung at one of his ſides, and a horn at the other: he was a croſs-poſt-boy, who goes to fetch the letters from the little towns, and carry them to thoſe, through which the great-poſt paſſes. This lout, more intent upon his pleaſure, than his buſineſs, and unconcern'd about the conſequence of the letters he carried; followed the chaſe very quietly, and was in at the death. Therefore, if this letter ſhould not come duly to hand, impute it to the poſt-boy's having met ſome hunters in his road.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LET-

LETTER XLVII.

To Monſieur DE BUFFONS;

Of the want of taſte in the Engliſh and French gardens.

STAMFORD, &c.

SIR,

THE Engliſh are not ſatisfy'd to ſucceed better than we do, in uſeful things; they diſpute with us even the frivolous advantage we can pretend to, of underſtanding thoſe which depend upon taſte, better than they do. I acknowledge their ſuperiority in orchards, and kitchen gardens; but in pleaſure gardens, I think they are much inferior to us. LE NAUTRE underſtood the beſt of any man in Europe, how to diſpoſe thoſe places, which are deſign'd only for the imbeliſhment of a houſe, and the pleaſure of thoſe who live in it; the Thuilleries are in their kind, what St. PETER's at Rome is, in its kind: they are admir'd by all who are capable of knowing their merit. 'Tis true, the finical air and ſtudied plans of our parterres, give no manner of pleaſure to thoſe, who love beau-

beautiful and ſimple nature; but then, the immenſely large bowling-greens of this country, run into the contrary extreme; they are too naked and too uniform: nature muſt be diverſify'd, to pleaſe; for as ſomebody has remark'd, *tireſomneſs is the daughter of uniformity*. An extenſive meadow, ſtrikes you in a very agreeable manner, at firſt ſight; but if it is not terminated by ſome riſing ground, and divided by a rivulet and ſome trees; you ſoon grow weary, of what you at firſt ſo much admir'd.

I am ſorry not to find in our gardens, thoſe thick groves of ever-greens, that equally defend from the ſcorching heat and pinching cold; and which in the middle of winter, remind us at leaſt of the charms of the ſpring. Since luxury has introduc'd among us, the faſhion to have ſummer and winter appartments; I am ſurpris'd that we don't, in imitation of the Engliſh, make us alſo gardens for both ſeaſons. Theſe groves of trees, that never ſhed their leaves, are agreeable walks for the fine days in the winter.

On the other hand, there's nothing diſpleaſes me ſo much, as thoſe eternal yew-trees, which are the principal ornament of the gardens, in this country. It is not ſufficient to have them in the common pyramidal, round or ſquare forms, which were formerly as faſhionable in France, as they are at preſent in England. The Engliſh gardners in this reſpect, are much greater artiſts than ours are; they cut all ſorts of trees,

into the moſt monſtrous and ridiculous ſhapes. They'll cut a holy-oak into an elephant, with a tower on his back ; they'll repreſent a fox, with hounds running after him, in box ; and at other-times cut a yew, into a formidable giant. They love to make a ſtatue out of a tree, and may juſtly boaſt of being the firſt ſculptors in England.

This bad taſte, prevail'd formerly all over Europe ; and we ſee, even at this time, in the gardens of Alcanſar, or the Moor's palace, at Seville ; ſeveral ſtatues form'd out of very high myrtle-trees, repreſenting muſicians, with their inſtruments in their hands.

'Tis in vain for people, who aim at true beauty in every thing, that is to ſay, nature, to make gardens, for patterns of ſimplicity and beauty : nothing can change the taſte of a citizen, who is as ſtupid as rich ; or of a country-ſquire, who is ſtill commonly more unpoliſh'd. They diſlike ſimplicity ; a tree, whoſe head is not exactly ſpherical, is too common to be plac'd in their garden ; but a yew-tree cut by the rule and compaſs, and crown'd with a bird, courſely ſketch'd out, charms them, becauſe it ſurpriſes them. They prefer theſe trifling works of art, to all the wonders of nature.

An author of this nation, to ridicule this childiſh and ridiculous taſte of his countrymen, ſays ; he knows a gardner who has carry'd this art to ſuch perfection, that he can repreſent a whole family, man, woman and children,

children, in the moſt natural manner: and that this ingenious artiſt has at preſent, a ſeries of ever-green trees and ſhrubs to ſell, which are cut with a truth and perfection, that nobody before him ever attain'd to. He gives the following catalogue of them:

" ADAM and EVE in yew. ADAM a lit-
" tle dammaged, by the *tree of knowledge* fal-
" ling upon him, in a great tempeſt. EVE
" and the *Serpent* in a very good condition.
" The *tower of Babel*, not yet finiſh'd.
" *Saint* GEORGE in box. His arm hardly
" long enough, but will be in a condition to
" run the dragon through, next *April*.
" A *dragon* in the ſame; with an ivy tail
" for the preſent. N. B. Theſe two pieces
" are to be ſold together.
" EDWARD *the black prince*, in Cypreſs.
" *A ſeries of buſts, of all the dukes of Nor-*
" *mandy that have been kings of England*, in
" box; from the originals in the ſame wood,
" that are now to be ſeen in the gardens of
" St. STEPHEN'S abby, at Caën, in Nor-
" mandy. That of WILLIAM the *Conque-*
" *ror*, is extremely fine.
" *A bear* in wild bay, now in flower;
" with a *huntſman* in juniper, with fruit on it.
" A couple of *dammag'd giants*, very
" cheap.
" *A queen* ELIZABETH in philyrea, a lit-
" tle inclining to the green ſickneſs, but in
" full growth.

" Another queen ELIZABETH, which was " very forward, but has ſince ſuffered, by " being too near another ſhrub.

" *A* BEN JOHNSON,* of exquiſite beauty, " in laurel.

" Several eminent modern poets, in bay- " tree; a little dammag'd, and will be ſold " for a penny a piece;

" *A hog* growing, chang'd into a *Porcupine*, " by being forgot for a week in a dry ſeaſon.

" *A hog* in lavender, with ſage growing in " his belly.

" *Noah's-ark* reſting on the mountain, in " Holly; the ſides have ſuffer'd a little " damage for want of water.

You ſee, ſir, by this ſort of ſatyre; that here, more even than in France; inſtead of imitating nature, and adorning their gardens with her greateſt beauties: they make uſe of art to diſfigure them. They have a greater regard for the whimſical fancies of the latter, than for the plain beauties of the former. In all ſorts of things, the majority of mankind prefer the *extraordinary* to the *beautiful*. However, 'tis a ſimple and natural air, in the works of art, as well as thoſe of the underſtanding, that makes them of the taſte of all nations, and all times. Thus St. James's-park, which at firſt ſight, ſeems to have nothing very extraordinary; yet nevertheleſs, by this ſort of ſimplicity, pleaſes you the more, every time you ſee it. And thus, the rural and ſolitary air of the Luxem-

* An Engliſh poet, cotemporary and rival of the famous SHAKESPEAR.

Luxembourg gardens, equally pleaſes all the world. The nature of beauty, in all ſorts of things, is ſuch; that even thoſe, who don't know the principles of it; feel its effects.

The Engliſh ſet a great value on their verdure, as they have reaſon to do; they ſpare no expence, to keep thoſe magnificent bowling-greens in fine order, that make their gardens ſo agreeable: and of which, thoſe of the *Palais-Royal*, will give you an idea, both with regard to the ezpence and the effect. But why muſt we run to an exceſs in every thing? Becauſe the turf is fine in England, they turn every thing into turf. Thus, for the ſake of a more extenſive verdure, before their houſes; they plant their ſhady walks and copſes at ſo great a diſtance; that you can't go to enjoy the ſhade of them, in the ſummer; without being expos'd to be ſcorch'd by the ſun. On the contrary, verdure is what is moſt wanted in many French gardens. That profuſion of ſand and box, artfully twin'd about, which covers our parterres, is in a low ſtyle; and preſents to the eye a moſt tireſome regularity. One would take them for deſigns of cut-paper work; as here in England, a ſquare divided into knots, and planted with yew-trees cut into all ſorts of forms, is not much unlike a cheſs-board, with its pieces on it. As this gives moſt of the Engliſh gardens, a *Gothick* air; I am afraid many of our parterres, are in a trifling taſte, which we are juſtly charg'd with in many things. I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XLVIII.

To Abbé L**C**

Of the animoſity the ſectaries in England bear to the eſtabliſh'd church; ſtory of two diſputants at a tavern, &c.

YORK, &c.

SIR,

I Think the tranquility, in which ſome authors boaſt the ſeveral ſects, who have eſtabliſh'd themſelves in England, ſince the misfortune of her ſeparation from the catholic church, live at this time; is without foundation. The wiſe authority of parliament can hardly keep them within bounds. The goſpel preaches nothing but peace and charity; yet thoſe, who call themſelves its miniſters, breath nothing but diſcord and ſedition.

England will always have reaſon to fear, the two parties of high and low-church; the firſt is the predominant, but the other ſtill powerful enough, to raiſe its head in troubleſome times. A ſmall alteration in the political government, might produce a total revolution in the eccleſiaſtical.

But

But 'tis in Scotland, particularly, that the hot *Preſbyterians* endeavour, to rekindle the flame of civil war, and make their famous and formidable *ſolemn league and covenant*, triumph by the ſword. Theſe pretended evangelical preachers, are ſtill animated with the ſpirit of their famous KNOX; who eſtabliſh'd his reformation in Scotland, by fire and ſword. Proud, with their humility, and inſolent, with their meekneſs; they deſpiſe all authority; their ſermons, are ſatyres; and their prayers, curſes. Where ever this doctrine, enemy to all ſubordination, has taken root; rebellion and civil wars have been the fruits of it. The ſeeds of it were ſown in England, in the time of queen ELIZABETH; the poiſonous fruits they produc'd, could not ripen 'till the reign of CHARLES I: when they equally diſhonour'd, both the Engliſh nation and the Proteſtant religion. The Engliſh now revere that prince, as a martyr, whom they executed on a ſcaffold, like a criminal.

Some days ſince, theſe fanatics aſſembled an infinite number of the populace in a plain near Edinburg, ſounded their ſeditious allarm, and endeavour'd to convert their audience into a rebellious army: but the vigilant and active magiſtrates happily extinguiſh'd the fire, theſe zealous incendiaries were going to kindle.

The only reaſon why the nonconformiſts in England, hate thoſe of the epiſcopal church ſo much, is on account of the honours and rich benefices they enjoy. Thoſe who are not

of the eſtabliſh'd church, look on the protection, which is due to thoſe that are, as a conſpiracy againſt their own; and that party which is only tolerated, would grant no toleration itſelf. It complains of the perſecution of its enemies, and perſecutes firſt, itſelf. It implores the authority of the laws againſt them, which it affronts, to make war upon them. The ſermons of the different parties, in the mean time, are commonly a ſort of hoſtilities which they commit againſt each other; and treat much more of controverſy than morality. BURNET ſays, ſpeaking of the Scotch puritans; *That they eſteem'd morality very little, and did not ſtudy it much.* What the conſequence of all theſe diſputes is, which tend more to inſpire mens hearts, with ſentiments contrary to chriſtian charity, than enlighten their underſtandings with the light of the goſpel; do you, ſir, judge, by the following fact, which I have found recorded by a writer of the laſt age.

Two honeſt Engliſhmen, one a devout and conſtant hearer of a preacher of the eſtabliſh'd church, and the other a zealous attendant at the meetings of a preſbyterian teacher, met one morning at a coffee-houſe; and appointed to meet at a tavern the next day, to diſcourſe on ſome points of doctrine, which thoſe two miniſters had preach'd on the Sunday before. With a greater inclination for the place, than the ſubjects they were to debate there; they met exactly at the time appointed. A bottle

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of French wine was brought, and one of them propos'd *Predeſtination*. After ſeveral bumpers, the diſpute grew warm; and the texts of ſcripture, and quotations from the fathers made ſuch a noiſe; that two lewd women, who are but too frequently found in the taverns at London, brought thither by the uproar, reſolv'd to enter the room, and put an end to it at once. They took them, as the author of this hiſtory ſays, for two rabbies, who could not agree about ſome paſſage in the old teſtament.

At the ſight of theſe miſerable wretches, the heat of the diſpute immediately ſubſided; our doctors chang'd the converſation with them, and libertiniſm ſucceeded to controverſy. Such is the effect of wine, it diſpoſes people to all ſorts of vice, and then objects need not be very tempting to become dangerous. The girls were ſoon ſent away, and our worthy diſputants reſum'd the bottle and predeſtination. The quarrel became greater than ever, and their animoſity increaſed, in proportion, as the fumes of the wine flew into their heads. At laſt they were quite drunk, and diſputed, 'till they drew their ſwords to end the controverſy; and if the diſturbance had not happily brought ſomebody into the room, in all probability, predeſtination had brought them both to a tragical end. The ſame wine that made them quarrel, reconcil'd them; they parted good friends, and one ſhaking t'other by the hand, ſaid; *Indeed, my dear friend, I am very ſorry, you will not go to heaven the ſame road that I do.*

Without

Without doubt, ſir, if the preachers, inſtead of entering into theſe theological diſputes, had preach'd that day againſt libertiniſm and drunkenneſs; the gentlemen would have been equally good chriſtians, and not have given that ſcandal. But I am not afraid to ſay it to you, ſir, who apply yourſelf to preaching, with all the talents that are requiſite to become uſeful to religion, and who know too well the duties of a chriſtian preacher, not to diſcharge them worthily: that in all countries whatever, moſt preachers are more intent on gratifying their indiſcreet zeal, or making proſelytes, than forming manners and correcting vice. Converting of ſouls, is the leaſt part of their employment in the pulpit, or rather, they are wholely imployed there, about themſelves. How many of them treat upon queſtions there, above the capacity of their audience, and ſometimes even above their own?

I remember to have heard a parſon of a village, in France, equally ſtupid and ignorant; preach before his pariſhoners, moſt of which knew not how to read; againſt thoſe that ſpend their time, in examining, whether the ſun moves round the earth, or the earth turns round upon its own axis. When ſheep are intruſted with ſhepherds, ſo incapable of conducting of them, is it ſurpriſing that ſo many of them go aſtray?

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

LETTER XLIX.

To Mr. H***.

Of true philoſophy; and the advantages accruing to mankind from the ſtudy of it. The pernicious tenets of HOBBES, VANINI, *&c. and the danger of truſting too much to our faculties.*

YORK, &c.

SIR,

SINCE we have begun in theſe laſt ages, to underſtand and cultivate true philoſophy; what great advantages has ſociety receiv'd from it! we no longer ſee the learned ſubmit to thoſe prejudices, which were a ſcandal to human reaſon. Judicial aſtrology has fallen into the contempt it juſtly deſerves. We muſt however own, there is nothing ſo improperly made uſe of, as the name of *Philoſopher*. They give it to many people, who are unworthy of it; and how many others boldly aſſume it, without having the leaſt title to it? He who ſpends his life in doing nothing, and he who labours hard in doing things that tend to nothing, equally ſtile themſelves *Philoſophers*; and have indeed both of them an equal title to the name: and he whoſe morals are ſcandalous,

ſcandalous, profanes this name by attributing it to himſelf.

Philoſophy, which is commonly prais'd or blam'd by the world, without being known; is neither a ſevere Inſtitution, that debars us from pleaſures, nor a ſyſtem of libertiniſm, that abandons us to all ſorts of vice: on the contrary, 'tis the ſearch after wiſdom; and what is wiſdom itſelf, but the knowledge of true happineſs? That which makes a man happy, is the only good he ſhould aim at; and his reaſon when enlighten'd, teaches him that good can only be found, in the fulfilling of his duty.

There is a philoſophy, that has no leſs than the whole viſible world, for its object, and which but few people can attain to; there is another ſtill more advantageous to ſociety, and which every body may arrive at: 'tis that which teaches a huſband, how he ſhould live with his wife; a father, how he ſhould educate his children; a maſter, how he ſhould behave to his ſervants: in ſhort, 'tis that which makes a good parent, a good friend, a good ſubject, and in a word, a virtuous citizen. If this philoſophy is as uncommonly, as it ought to be frequently met with in the world; let us candidly own, that 'tis to the ſhame of human nature.

How commendable are you, ſir, who make it your only employ, to correct the errors of mankind, and teach them true wiſdom! Con-

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ſecrating poetry to philoſophy; is bringing it back to its original, and reſtoring it to its ancient luſtre. Poets were the firſt preceptors of mankind. I can't ſay which I moſt admire in you; your fine talents, or the wiſe uſe you make of them; your *poem on happineſs*, is a proof of both. In this country, the country of philoſophers; 'tis difficult to find them at your age: you are born with that happy genius, which at one and the ſame time, produces both the flowers of the ſpring, and fruits of the autumn.

The philoſopher that dogmatizes, hurried on by a chain of conſequences, is not always ſenſible of the dryneſs of his logick; the poet, that is carried away by the fire of his genius, is not accurate enough in his reaſoning: and yet poetry itſelf can't move us, if 'tis void of regularity. On the other hand, 'tis not enough to prove, we muſt alſo be convinced. But how few men are there, who join the graces of the imagination, with juſtneſs of ideas!

If the Engliſh neglect gracefulneſs too much, both in their writings and diſcourſes; they at leaſt affect that good ſenſe in every thing, for which they are ſo remarkable. The French often jeſt inſtead of reaſoning; they ſport with every thing, and ſubſtitute banter to erudition. Thoſe who are ſo little upon their guard, in their diſcourſe; don't reflect, that though a man is allow'd to be ignorant of many things,

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he is never allow'd to talk of thoſe, he is ignorant of. The Engliſh are not ſo guilty of this fault; but then they have another, equally diſagreeable in company: they don't converſe, they diſcourſe. Politics, which they are continually employ'd in, accuſtoms them to a ſort of reaſoning, which becomes diſagreeable, in familiar converſation. Beſides, thoſe that reaſon moſt, are not oftenеſt in the right. An inclination to diſputing, ſhews more vanity than wiſdom; more fondneſs for ones own opinion, than love for truth. This fault in many Engliſh, may be only the effects of their education; moſt of which are educated in ſuch a manner, as makes them fitter for a univerſity, than the world. And for this reaſon, 'tis only in England, that one finds pedants, even at court.

Great advantages reſult from the liberty they enjoy in this country, of ſpeaking and writing whatever they think. By this free communication of their thoughts, they mutually inſtruct each other; and the underſtanding becomes more elevated. Emulation gives it wings, which make it take a happy flight. With theſe, VERULAM * ſoar'd into the higheſt regions of metaphyſics; there, his penetrating eyes, ſpied at leaſt, what others have ſince more fully diſcovered. His ſucceſſors, NEWTON and LOCKE, have only made ſuch a progreſs in phi-

* Lord Chancellor BACON.

philoſophy, by following the paths he trac'd out for them. But this liberty has alſo its inconveniences; they abuſe it, becauſe men abuſe every thing. THEOPHRASTUS ſaid, that human knowledge, with the help of the ſenſes, might judge of things, to a certain point; but when arriv'd at firſt cauſes, muſt ſtop there; either on account of their extreme difficulty, or its own inſufficiency. Our modern philoſophers have been too confident. Several of BACON's diſciples have loſt themſelves; ſome by leaving the paths, he had clear'd for them, and others by daring to penetrate into the abyſſes, which had ſtopp'd that great philoſopher. COLLINS, TINDAL, and the earl of SHAFTESBURY himſelf, by endeavouring to go beyond the bounds of human knowledge, loſt themſelves.

Thus in all times, men of the brighteſt underſtandings, have run into the greateſt errors, under pretence of ſhaking off the prejudices of the age they liv'd in. Don't let us with the vulgar, admire the cynic in his tub; who endeavour'd to acquire the reputation of a wiſe man, by breaking through all the laws of modeſty and decency. The rags, he affected to cover himſelf with, were the livery of his pride; and his pretended wiſdom, more ridiculous, than all the follies he arrogantly cenſur'd. When waſhing his cabbage, and ſeeing ARISTIPPUS paſs by, he ſaid

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to him; *If you could live upon cabbage, you would not make your court to a tyrant:* (DENNIS) ARISTIPPUS very juſtly anſwer'd him, *If you could live amongſt men, you would not waſh cabbage.*

Where does not human reaſon ſtray to! Doubt is the only road, that leads us to the light of truth; but if we don't walk very cautiouſly in it, we run the riſk of falling into the darkneſs of Pyrrhoniſm. Is it not ſurpriſing, that men ſhould endeavour to acquire the eſteem of the public, by ſtriving to break the moſt ſacred band of all ſocieties; in declaring their opinion to others; that there was neither virtue nor vice; truth, nor doubt? Though people, who affect to doubt of every thing, are incapable of demonſtrating any thing; their maxims, nevertheleſs, are of the moſt pernicious conſequence to morality: and the ſcandalous authors, who have the raſhneſs to publiſh them; ought to be puniſhed by the laws, whoſe foundations they ſap. Like thoſe who poiſon the ſource of a river, they corrupt the principle of all our paſſions. Mankind, according to them, are only govern'd by force, or prejudice. There's an end of our country, our families, and our duty! What monſtrous tenets! Let us not envy our neighbours a liberty, that does not permit the reſtraining ſuch exceſſes. A people ſhould have enough of it, to know the baſis of their duty; but not enough

nough to deſtroy it. The generality of mankind, from the weakneſs of their intellects, are expos'd to be miſled; they ſwallow poiſon, without knowing it. 'Tis the duty of thoſe, who have the care of the laws, to prevent its being ſpread about; they ought to be as watchful for the maintenance of the good morals of a ſtate, as for the preſervation of the lives and fortunes of thoſe that compoſe it. PARKER, an Engliſh biſhop, in a tract that was publiſh'd in 1678, againſt Atheiſts, who teach their principles; mentioning among others, VANINI and HOBBES, would have thoſe people, who ſubvert all the duties of life, and teach men to confound virtue with vice, treated like public peſts.

I know that a man, who thinks, is, with regard to one, who does not think; what a man who ſees clearly, is, compar'd to a blind man. What is thinking? 'Tis ſeeing. LOCK ſays, that knowledge is as grateful to the underſtanding, as light to the eyes. But in metaphyſics, as well as natural philoſophy; there are precautions which the defects of our organs make neceſſary, to prevent the inconveniences our curioſity might expoſe us to. On the one hand; there are ſome weak ſights, that are fatigu'd by too much attention; and the reſult of all endeavours to fix them, is only trouble and confuſion. On the other; there are ſome objects which blind thoſe, who are obſtinately determin'd to gaze on them.

That man, who does not know the ſtrength, or reach of his ſight, is moſt frequently deceiv'd by it. The great opinion we have of our knowledge, is one cauſe of our ignorance; and confidence in our ſtrength, one ſpring of our imbecillity.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your moſt humble, &c.

The End of the firſt Volume.

ERRATA.

PAGE 101. l. 9. *for* governor, *read* government; p. 108. l. 4. *for* from, *r.* them; p. 119. l. 28. *add* as; p. 185. l. 25. *add* who; p. 187. l. 31. *for* Θεοῖν τὶ, *r.* Θεῖόν τι; p. 198. l. 16. *dele* to; p. 281. l. 32. *for* to, *r.* in; p. 289. l. 6. *for* Romans, *r.* Normans; p. 334. l. 3. *dele* ſo; p. 357. l. 4. *for* you, *r.* yoke.